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ABSTRACT

The development of a community school as a joint project of Queens College, the Louis Armstrong Middle School (I.S. 227), and the New York City Central Board of Education is described in this book. The contents of the book's eight chapters are as follows: (1) an introduction providing background material; (2) a discussion of the foundation on which the collaboration was built; (3) a description of the six-month period before the school opened, when roles were being defined, relationships were being developed, and the resistance and skepticism of college faculty and bureaucrats were being dealt with; (4) an analysis of the development of the college-public school collaboration; (5) an overview of the program's first three years, from the perspective of the college director; (6) a description of the development of the community school and its various projects; (7) discussion of how the community project developed bonds between school, college, and community; and (8) plans for expanding the collaboration to an elementary school. An appendix contains interviews with participants in the collaboration and others. (KH)

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# When a College Works *with* a Public School

## *A Case Study of School-College Collaboration*

Sidney Trubowitz, *Principal Author*
Johanna Duncan
William Fibkins
Paul Longo
Seymour Sarason
*& a Preface by* Burton Blatt

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Institute for Responsive Education
*Boston*

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*A Case Study of School-College Collaboration*

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# *PREFACE*

Our story opens with a distinguished professor from Yale University taking a walk with a friend who had just been appointed to the presidency of Queens College. The time was late spring, 1979. The talk was on Saul Cohen's idea that his college could create an innovative middle school—one so attractive that parents would line up to enroll their children, and college teachers would involve not only their Education students but even themselves. The professor, Seymour Sarason, tried to rein in Cohen's enthusiasm. After all, hadn't Sarason studied the infinite ways new settings fail? To Cohen, the challenge would be a unique adventure, especially for a geographer who professed to know little about the formal structure of schools and the professionals who serve them—teachers, psychologists, administrators, and teachers of teachers. But after all was said and done, for the Yale professor it became an illuminating opportunity to examine the creation of an educational enterprise. Sarason's works on regional centers for the mentally retarded, psychoeducational clinics, innovative curricula, and networking had not only become seminal references in the literature on program creation, but also—some informed scholars would argue—had powered the Community Psychology Movement. Now he would be examining yet another intentional environment—this time a public school in the heart of America's largest city.

When Saul Cohen and Frank Macchiarola, New York City's Chancellor of Public Schools, finished their little talk, an idea had been planted—that the time was perfect for a committed college to join with a committed school system to do something truly important in improving schools and the institutions that prepare their teachers. On the face of it, one would bet that the idea must fail—that is, if it could ever get off the ground. The system Macchiarola ran had its own troubles; and from its very conception, the Louis Armstrong Middle School was hard pressed to find reasons to smile, ironic in light of what immediately comes to mind when one remembers its namesake. And before President Cohen, the Queens College School of Education wore its general depression with the dignity that refined people exhibit when all is near hopeless, but also when everyone knows that it's gauche to cry about it. Seemingly, the "arrangement" was concocted to rub salt in raw wounds.

But things rarely are what they seem to be. By 1979, the School of Education wasn't any longer that demoralized frightened environment visible to anyone who saw it three years earlier—when its resources were yanked its untenured professors fired, and its remaining faculty bewildered. By 1979, the school now had a president who didn't need to be pushed to do something about education. He was the pusher. And the public schools had a chancellor who *wanted* to set up experimental demonstration schools with the city's institutions of higher learning. In 1979, Saul Cohen was able to enlist one of his creative professors, Sidney Trubowitz, to direct that collaboration. Frank Macchiarola was able to recruit a superb principal to lead as well as administer the school—Anthony Sanfilippo. Because Cohen and Macchiarola wanted this program to succeed as much as they wanted anything, it all worked. Of course, it was good that the School of Education has an intelligent and supportive Dean, John Lidstone. And it was good that there were professors in the School and throughout the College who saw something genuinely important here. And it was good that Seymour Sarason didn't let his initial pessimism stop him from involvement throughout those early months which turned into years—and to this day.

There are several significant figures in this engrossing book, but possibly none more central to the day-to-day success of the collaboration than Sidney Trubowitz, a former teacher and principal, now a professor whose interests remained focused on the life of a real school and its inhabitants. He opens the book with an admission of which "everyone" is quite aware, even though we don't usually talk about it. Almost from the beginning, public schools and colleges haven't gotten along very well. Why? Trubowitz reminds us, for example, that it was only when college enrollments dropped and their budgets were strained that schools of education volunteered to go out to the public schools to give them a bit of "in-service." To me, "in-service education" has always been a curious term. It is non-idiomatic, not comparable to related usages of the term. For example, elevators are "in service" or not. One's son in the Army is "in the service." And then there is the other peculiarity. We call it "education." We never use the term "in-service training." But invariably, we say we are providing "in-service education." What does that mean, especially when so much of it appears to be little more than low level entertainment or, even worse, "time filler" for teachers held hostage by certification bureaus—for people who must attend the course in order to be eligible for a certificate or a new salary level? Whose fault is it? Teachers are not without culpability. Neither are our state departments of education. But schools of education, themselves, not only bought into

this cynical mania for in-service education, not only profited greatly from the participation, but some were actually saved from ruin by it—rescued by the very groups they were purporting to save. Of course, there is another side. Some of what goes on as education is education.

This is a serious book. As the informed reader knows, college-public school collaborations have not made the best seller lists—mainly because few have been written. Of course, we know the way some professionals write, so I'm not trying to suggest that that was the only reason why people haven't heard more about what's going on between colleges and schools. But now you have something to read that is well written, positive, even inspirational. Most important, it has ideas. Trubowitz fittingly is the book's major author. He leads you through the history of the collaboration, what was done, why they did it, what happened.

There are others who contribute to this relatively seamless creation—incidentally not common in co-authored works of this kind. In his usual provocative and unique style, my good friend Seymour Sarason gives you an opening chapter that will help you get the leading players straight in your mind. Furthermore, he will raise for you (as he invariably does) the right questions to ask about what's going on here. Other chapters by Bill Fibkins and Johanna Duncan offer fascinating insights into the community school movement and what it means in the context of this particular collaboration. There's more—much more—which I can't get into: a fine epilogue by Paul Longo, revealing interviews with the dean of education, professors, a parent, a teacher, the principal. But if prefaces recounted everything to be found in a book, who would feel the need to actually read it? And authors have trouble enough sustaining the interest of their readers.

Believe me, if you are interested in our "nation at risk" (it's a nation *at risk*, serious business that the President of the United States himself—especially the President—should be involved in), in the "crisis in the schools," in the idea that while colleges and universities are devoted to studying problems they also have ultimate responsibilities in helping to solve some of those problems, then you will be interested in this work. Strengthening America's schools is *everybody's* business. It's the particular work of school teachers and their supervisors. It's also a responsibility of ordinary citizens and their institutions. It's the responsibility of executives who run major corporations, and professors of engineering or English on a university campus. The relationship between what occurs in the first grade classroom and what occurs in the university or corporate laboratory is profound. Anyone who is concerned about the pool of competent young people to lead the coming generations must appreciate

that relationship. When a child's teacher fails him, the consequences are compounded not only throughout his school life, but also throughout his life. Both the Ph.D. student as well as the ordinary man or woman in the factory are products of schooling. In past years, while there was worry expressed by the citizens concerning our schools, there didn't seem to be much done about such problems.

It is different today! If we are not engulfed in a national crisis on education, we are surely engulfed by a national debate. Essentially, it confronts that very American dream and dilemma of wanting to have everything—in this case both excellence and equity. The many reports—Carnegie, Gardiner, Hunt, Sizer, Adler, Goodlad, Boyer; I have read at least 20—call for better schools, better teachers, better curricula to prepare better students. But most, if not every one, of those reports articulate goals for *all* pupils, which may not be attainable by many among that enormous number and diversity of children attending our schools. For me, this book sharpens a significant debate on education—between those who believe it's better to do well with fewer students than provide mediocre preparation for the masses, and those who still cleave to that uniquely American promise of educational opportunity for all of our citizens.

During the months and years ahead, we will need to clarify whether the gains made on behalf of the handicapped and disadvantaged were ephemeral or, rather, reflections of a century-long unfolding of national policy. The months ahead will also reveal the depth of our commitment to making teaching an honored profession, one which rewards its practitioners with decent salaries and decent working conditions. There will soon be a national teacher shortage—not only in Mathematics and the Sciences, not only in Special Education, but in virtually all elementary and secondary fields. If we are resolved to improve education for our young, we will not only deal with shortages but also seek to improve the quality of our teachers, their morale, and their commitment to make this work their lifelong profession. If we don't begin to solve the problem of attracting and retaining better teachers for our schools, no reports and no collaborations will save us from inevitable disaster. But as this book so vividly illustrates, outstanding people are attracted to stimulating environments where teachers as well as children can grow and contribute.

The past couple of years has been a time for rhetoric and debate. The future must be a time for thoughtful action. It's never too late for a nation to be wise, but if it can ever be too late this is almost that time. I'm thankful that this group from Queens College and the New York City schools "got off the dime" and actually pulled off something that they can be proud of and society can take comfort in. A few more such experi-

ments and we may actually, if not once and for all, solve the "crisis." Once upon a time, no college or university regarded children's schools as deserving a place in its academic life. This book offers a powerful argument against that wrong idea.

*Burton Blatt*
*Centennial Professor and Dean*
*Syracuse University*
*School of Education*
*May, 1984*

# *INTRODUCTION*

**Sidney Trubowitz**
*Queens College*

The history of relationships between public schools and colleges is filled with examples of conflict and hostility. Public school staff refer to college professors as woolly-headed theorists with no sense of reality about actual classrooms. College faculty warn of involvement with public schools and their bureaucracy. They point to innovative student teachers who are sucked up into the morass of public school conservatism and whose major goal becomes survival in the system. Parents join the fray by expressing resentment toward the patronizing attitudes of professionals who would relegate them to preparing coffee and cake. They are wary of college professors who enter the public school world to do their experiments and then disappear to publish findings in some inaccessible periodical.

Evidence exists to illustrate the unhappy aftermath of previous school-college collaborations. A report of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) speaks of teacher dissatisfaction with college-sponsored in-service training programs.[1] This report points out that school people are weary of an in-service education plan in which a big-name expert from the university arrives upon the scene and gives "solutions" to their problems and then quickly moves away from the situation. The report indicates that teachers do not want theory; they want training that will pay off in the classroom. Most of all, they do not want remedies imposed by colleges, often the very ones they feel failed to give them practical preparation for their jobs in the first place.

*The Way It Is*, a film which describes New York University's involvement with Brooklyn Junior High School 57, represents one dramatic illustration of a college's inability to deal with the problems of an inner-city school.[2] This film reveals some of the factors that have caused previous collaborations to fail. It shows the absence of understanding, the

patronizing attitudes, and the lack of skill that have often characterized college-public school ventures. The film is almost totally negative in its approach to the students and the school, with phrases such as "combat zone" and "battlefield" used to describe the school and community. The professors describe themselves as being in a war against insurmountable odds. College personnel deployed in the school are shocked by student behavior, reacting as if they have entered an inner-city school for the first time. They struggle and flounder like novice teachers with no experience or background. As one teacher in the film put it, "The college doesn't know what it is doing." Another reason for the failure of this particular collaboration is the narrowness of the approach. The university focuses almost entirely on improving teacher methodology, failing to recognize that changing individual teachers will not bring about institutional reform. Little attention is given to the total system. The result for the most part is futility and chaos. It is as if a group on a ship were working to patch the deck while the vessel was sinking.

*The Way It Is* portrays the difficulties encountered with hardly any mention of the successes achieved. The result of this focus on failure is that within less than six months, half of the college staff involved in the project had quit. The film shows that college-public school collaboration will fail if expectations are negative, if college personnel are poorly prepared, if goals are unrealistic, and if any recognition of success is allowed to sink below a miasma of failure.

There is much to be learned from the unsuccessful experiences of others; some of the most detailed and useful materials emanating from collaborations between colleges and public schools have been descriptions of failure. *Anatomy of Educational Innovation: An Organizational Analysis of an Elementary School*, is an excellent book that reports on the problems that arose when a university and a public school tried to initiate educational innovation.[3] The authors of this book show how professional educators and social scientists fail to do justice to the complicated problems involved in originating educational innovation. They describe the tendency of professors to deal with issues at general and lofty levels rather than to give concepts concrete operational definitions. In attempting to initiate pervasive change, university personnel found that unanticipated events caused a need for additional resources. They discovered that grandiose ambitions led to an array of difficulties posing seemingly insurmountable problems. They learned that trying to accomplish too much in too short a time can bring chaos. The gloomy result was that, two years after the school opened, the principal had left and the third year's teaching staff included but two people from the original group.

Successful college-public school collaborations have received little

attention. This negative history has kept colleges and public schools from working together except in the most superficial manner. In some cases colleges avoid involvement with public schools altogether; instead, they provide students with field experience by establishing campus laboratory schools. These schools, located within the geographical confines of the university and often populated by faculty children, make it easy for professors to do research, to place students in field work, and to salve consciences about being connected to schools. Another approach has been to locate nearby schools, find the superior teachers, and place students in their classes. The college then establishes a shadow presence with a quick introduction to the principal, a brief professorial observation from the back of the room, and an occasional meeting with the cooperating teacher.

Public schools have not encouraged or sought close collaboration. They have looked at outsiders as sources of threat rather than of support. With the base of knowledge undergirding education so fragile, many schools are unsure of themselves and avoid inquiry, and see an attack in every question. Access to many public schools is difficult. Parents' visits to classrooms, although not officially forbidden, are restricted to particular times of the year. The problems involved in implementing research in most urban public schools are enormous. Bureaucratic red tape and frequent negative responses to proposed research have led many a doctoral candidate or professor to seek out private and parochial schools for student populations with whom to conduct studies.

Recent events are pushing universities toward establishing better ties with public schools. One such event is declining student enrollment in teacher education programs. The result of having fewer students is that there is not enough for faculty to do. In-service education has become an opportunity to fill out professorial teaching schedules. Another impetus is that more funding is being directed to public school sites as opposed to college locations. In other cases, grants for which institutions of higher education may apply prescribe that the college must work with a public school. Thus, in order to get into the money act, universities have been compelled to initiate collaborations with public schools.

Public schools are also recognizing the benefits to be gained from closer involvement with colleges. The stature of public schools, particularly in urban centers, has been diminishing in the eyes of the general population. Fear of violence, concern about the public school's ability to teach the basic skills, and worry about the possible negative impact of lower-class children have combined to increase the pressure for financial support for non-public schools and to hasten the flight of the middle-class into private and parochial schools. In a time when public school

education needs bolstering more than ever, the financial and human resources available have never been less. Tax dollars have been withdrawn and the better college students are preparing for occupations giving greater promise of employment and financial reward. In this time of limited resources, colleges have been used only as minimal sources of support. Colleges lending their resources and expertise represent a possible means of reversing the flow of children out of the public schools. Despite the criticisms leveled at teacher education programs, help from colleges could make a difference. Such help, if it is to be of real value, needs to go beyond the traditional assignment of student teachers. What is needed is a commitment between a college and a public school to total involvement, to a true marriage of people, ideas, and activities, and beyond the initial commitment, to the development of effective patterns of working together.

In addition to the practical benefits, there are other advantages. Schools of education have long been criticized for being out of touch with the field. Professors who spend many hours in the school building working with public school faculty and administration, parents, student teachers, and pupils are not likely to remain ignorant of real educational problems. The charge that the college stands isolated from the real world will not remain credible if professors meet on a regular basis with public school teachers, if college classes are held in the public school, and if the college faculty works directly with children. The professor in the field will gain new insights and sharpen or learn skills, for the public school provides an arena in which to test ideas.

Another advantage of closer contact between college and school is the improvement of teacher education programs. Giving prospective teachers early experience with children can assist in their professional development. A teacher education program with ready access to a public school can lend reality and vitality to what may have been meaningless courses in child development and educational methods. The crumbling of barriers between the public schools and colleges may ameliorate the problems some professors have in finding populations with which to do research. A close relationship with a field situation also increases the college's chances of obtaining funding for grants.

College-school collaboration can help deal with the fact that more and more classes are being led by people in their forties, fifties, and even sixties and among whom are burned-out teachers and lethargic professors debilitated by lack of change. A new enterprise can stimulate fresh bursts of thought and action. Working with a public school opens possibilities for professors who feel the need to combine doing with thinking. When a university accepts the mission to improve schools, its

role as an integral part of the larger society is highlighted, and its professors feel that they are valued.

Colleges and public schools have long operated as separate, closed systems. Since colleges ultimately have to deal with the graduates of public schools as well as prepare the teachers who work in the public schools, the time has come to recognize mutual interest and to devote energies collaboratively in the interests of good education for children. Colleges have frequently made negative comments on the products of the public school system, pointing to the necessity for remediation at the college level. If true, it behooves the colleges to work more closely with the public schools so that more students are prepared to deal with postsecondary school education.

## *A COLLEGE-PUBLIC SCHOOL COLLABORATION*

In March 1979 Queens College of the City University of New York, the Louis Armstrong Middle School (I.S. 227), and the New York City Central Board of Education came together to work toward the development of an innovative middle school. Each accepted the commitment to join resources and expertise in an attempt to create a school that would give cause for pride rather than criticism and that would draw children back from the private school sector. This book is about what happened when the college, the public school, the Central Board of Education, and the community interacted. It is a report of how the groups dealt with each other and the functions they performed. It is a discussion of people and of what they did alone and together. It includes an examination of the environment surrounding each institution and the institutional norms that influenced what occurred. It is a description of what was learned by college representatives about how to help and how not to help. It is an attempt to describe the problems that faced the college in its collaboration with the public school and the bureaucracy of which it is a part, and to indicate ways in which these problems were approached. It is an analysis of efforts to address what has been a separation of training and practice in education and to achieve greater compatibility between what occurs in colleges and the public schools. It is a report that can be of value to other colleges and public schools involved in collaborative relationships. For even though colleges working with schools and communities in different areas may have different experiences, the problems, questions and forces pressuring them are comparable. For example, each institution is affected in its interaction with the other by its own unique history. The quality of leadership in every case is crucial. The norms that affect behavior in each

system inevitably influence what happens when people from different groups meet to work on problems of mutual concern.

As those of us involved in this collaboration began to work with other schools and heard more about other college-school collaborations, we gained further confirmation of the fact that what had been learned during the course of the partnership with the Louis Armstrong Middle School was transferable to other situations. This then is a book that identifies principles that could be useful to others as they attempt to establish relationships between institutions.

Although there is still much to be gained from other studies analyzing the interactions between colleges and public schools that have failed, additional benefit can accrue from an exploration of what has proved successful. The collaboration between Queens College and I.S. 227 has been a success, if success can be measured by attendance (93 percent), achievement (86.5 percent of eighth graders read above grade level), applications to the school (there is a waiting list of well over a thousand), and pupil acceptances to high schools having special criteria (150 of 240 I.S. 227 pupils passed tests and/or interviews to gain admission to these schools). Success is further indicated by the fact that I.S. 227 continues to see Queens College as a positive and integral part of its operation. A statement in the school's *Teacher Handbook* attests to this attitude:

> Many professors and consultants are involved deeply in the day-by-day activities of the school. They observe, confer, counsel, conduct workshops and provide us with invaluable professional assistance and support. The commitment of the college is real, vital and constructive. The presence of student teachers and student observers helps to encourage us as well as provide positive training for future teachers.

This is a book about a college-public school collaboration where the gap between the two has been bridged and where each seeks further and deeper involvement with the other.

The first chapter was written by Dr. Seymour Sarason. It contains the reasons why he predicted this project would fail, reasons with which those of us with major responsibility in the earliest phase could not strongly disagree. Throughout the project Dr. Sarason was available as a friend and consultant and he served us well, encouraging and advising us while not letting us gloss over what he called the difficult but predictable problems. Where he was especially helpful was in confirming our opinion that the pressure to produce results, to appear as if one is successful and the future secured, can goad one into statements and actions that can be massively counterproductive. We knew that the collaborative foundation

we needed to build would take a minimum of two years and that there were no shortcuts. It was helpful to have someone who periodically reminded us to accept a realistic time perspective and to resist the temptations of the quick fix.

Chapters 2 through 5 were written by me. Chapter 2 discusses the foundation on which the collaboration was built. Interorganizational relationships have been negatively affected because little attention has been given to the impact of setting, historical events, institutional norms, traditions, and personalities. This chapter explores the environment out of which the collaboration emerged, since to omit such a consideration is to ignore what inevitably will affect future events. The foundation was made up of key people participating in the project, the institutions they represented, the setting in which the project took place, and the events preceding the agreement to work together. The importance of understanding the foundation was dramatized when, during the course of the collaboration, important people in the project left. The effects of their leaving on the project were clear.

Chapter 3 deals with the six-month period before the school opened. During that time roles were filled and began to be defined, relationships developed, and preparations for the opening of school were made. The obstacles became clearer: the lack of trust, the different value systems of the major participants, the problem of quickly obtaining students, and the skepticism and resistance of college faculty and high-level bureaucrats. In these months, we became aware of the lasting effects of historical events and of how intense were the feelings about the school and its development. This chapter discusses the ways in which these problems were addressed, ways that we believe have implications for other school systems and for other beginning collaborations. This chapter is useful to students preparing to be administrators, since it identifies the pressures on the school leader, especially those that come from the community, parents, and bureaucratic regulations. It can also be useful for college personnel initiating involvement with a school, since it suggests how to proceed and indicates pitfalls to avoid.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of the development of the college-public school collaboration. It explores such questions as:

- How did the relationships between college director and principal, between college personnel and public school staff, and between college and community and parents evolve?

- What were the effects of the collaboration on people and institutions?

- What were the factors that contributed to the strength of the collaborative effort?
- What issues and problems have been identified in the course of the interaction?
- How did change take place? What inhibited the process of change?
- What conflict situations developed and how were they dealt with?
- What role did parents and community play in decisionmaking?
- How did the collaboration deal with the effects of bureaucratic strictures and judicial decisions?
- What did the college learn about how to help and how not to help?

These are but a sampling of the questions that arose as the college interacted with the public school, as the college dealt with the Central Board, as the college worked with the parents and community, and as college personnel related to other college faculty. We had identified questions and potential problems prior to entering the collaboration. We had, for example, anticipated some difficulty in working with the bureaucracy. However, we were not prepared for all the obstacles we faced. We knew that value differences were bound to have an effect. We did not recognize how deeply ingrained they were and how much they influenced the way groups and individuals dealt with each other.

Chapter 4 shows what the college accomplished through its involvement in the project. The faculty who worked on the project became clearer about what a collaboration means and gained insights as to how other institutions could become involved. We learned about how these institutions might go about offering help and bringing their services to a school system in an effective manner. We discovered how each institution in a collaboration can profit through teachers and professors growing professionally, through a teacher education program that is modified to bring education students closer to schools and children, through a school curriculum changing to be more compatible with the needs of young adolescents, and through professors and teachers developing a sense of collegiality.

Chapter 5 covers the first three years of the college-public school collaboration. It begins with my role as college director. I point out how

the differences in values between the college and the public school affected my functioning. I try to give a sense of my job as the man in the middle. From there I examine the changes that have occurred and continue to take place: a new principal has been chosen, two new co-presidents have been elected to the Parents' Association, key college faculty have left, and the school has increased its population to over 1,300 pupils. I describe the effects of these changes and how we try to deal with them. This personal reflection on the role of the college liaison shows the nature of the job, the pressures that inevitably appear, and ways of responding to these pressures. This chapter may be helpful to others who will be occupying the position of liaison between institutions and illustrates the crucial importance of the role.

A collaboration between a college and a public school represents a mammoth professional endeavor. But it is more than that. It is a human experience encompassing frustration and gratification, understanding and misunderstanding, liking and disliking, enjoyable activity and drudgery. In trying to describe the collaboration between Queens College and I.S. 227, I was faced with the problem of how to describe the obstacles, how best to share the professional insights, and how, at the same time, to capture the interaction among people that was part of all that happened. To give the sense of people dealing with each other, I have recounted key events and discussed their implications.

Chapters 6 and 7 present approaches for developing a community school. Although the accounts of how this was accomplished are personal, the ideas, the problems and ways of dealing with problems, and the activities described can be useful to others who agree that both the school and the community are necessary components of the process of education.

In Chapter 6, William Fibkins recounts the development of a community school. He describes its beginnings, the groups and individuals involved, the issues that emerged as school, college and community interacted, and the approaches utilized to create a school that would be truly responsive to community needs.

In Chapter 7, Johanna Duncan relates how the activities of the community project developed bonds between school, college and community. She focuses in great part on how workshops and a conference created a psychological sense of community.

In Chapter 8, Dr. Paul Longo presents the beginnings of a new Queens College-public school collaboration, this time with an elementary school. One of our earliest goals was to work with more than one school—applying what knowledge we would gain at I.S. 227 along with increasing the college's relationships with area schools. Whereas I.S. 227 was a new

school, the elementary school was an old one with an established tradition and organization.

The early stages of the college-school interaction will have a major influence on the future of the collaboration. At this time what is said and not said, promised and not promised, is most critical. Caution and suspicion can be overcome not by words but only by actions. The avoidance of directness can too easily be in the service of unrealistic fears. Handled without care, these early days can contain the seeds of future conflict and failure.

Dr. Longo's chapter deals with the issues that arose in this new setting, thus offering an interesting comparison with those issues faced in early phases of our work at I.S. 227. It is useful to note those difficulties that appear to be a constant in such collaborative efforts as well as those that were peculiar to each particular setting. This chapter documents interactions that took place as well as the decisions that had to be made and the results they initially brought. It offers a fresh perspective on the nuances of a continuing process: exploring the potential for closer cooperation between colleges and schools.

Finally, the appendix contains interviews with a number of people who either played important roles in this collaboration or whose perspectives on it are candid and illuminating. We are grateful to Dr. Sarason for conducting these interviews. If they paint a rosier picture than reality would confirm, it is not because Dr. Sarason sought out interviewees who would tell us only what we wanted to hear.

## NOTES

1. The American Association of School Administrators' report entitled, "Teacher Competency: Problems and Solutions," discussed in a column by Fred Hechinger, *New York Times*, July 15, 1980, p. C4.

2. *The Way It Is*, produced by Harold Mayer in association with National Educational Television (NET) and distributed by NET in 1967.

3. Louis M. Smith and Patrick M. Keith, *Anatomy of Educational Innovation: An Organizational Analysis of an Elementary School*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1971.

CHAPTER 1

# *Two Cultures Meet: The Queens College-Louis Armstrong Middle School Collaboration*

**Seymour Sarason**
*Yale University*

I predicted that the project described in this book would fail, would be another casualty in the history of college-school collaborations. The prediction was made in the late spring of 1979 while I was taking a walk with Saul Cohen, who had become president of Queens College (part of the City University of New York) the previous summer. I, of course, did not articulate the prediction, but in what I thought were too subtle ways, I tried to voice my concerns. Saul had outlined a plan whereby some members of the college's departments of education would assume responsibility for the setting up and sustaining of a new middle school to be opened in September. In September! Who would be the college staff? Would they be volunteers or those who succumbed to arm twisting? What would be their responsibilities? What was the nature of the agreement Saul had worked out with the Chancellor of city schools? How were the principal and teachers to be chosen? By whom? When? How could I help one of my dear friends avoid a catastrophe?

Before going on, let me tell you several things about Saul Cohen. First, although without formal training and credentials in the field of education (by training and education he is a geographer), he had been involved for years in matters central to our public schools. Second, when he came to Queens, he knew that in the fiscal massacre of 1976, the departments of education had received the largest cuts. Understandably, their level of morale was not much above ground level. That was something he intended to rectify, and the collaboration he outlined to me had been in his mind for some time as a vehicle to reinvigorate the members of the faculty. Third, every college and university needs constituencies, and one of the major tasks of a president is to develop such constituencies. This, Saul believed, could be accomplished in diverse ways and one of them, in the case of a college in New York City, was to demonstrate a willingness to bring its resources to bear on the effort to improve the public schools. Fourth, engaging in such efforts was not a matter of *noblesse oblige*, but a way whereby members of the faculty themselves could learn. Saul did not justify such efforts because they were practical or helpful, but because they promised to contribute to the store of knowledge. Saul is the last person on Earth who would look at a college as a service agency.

During the walk I learned that a principal for the school had already been chosen, and that Saul had asked Dr. Sidney Trubowitz to be the liaison between school and college. Saul had not met the new principal. The one thing he was sure of was that Sid, who had once been a principal, knew a lot about the city system and was good at working with people. Sid, Anthony Sanfilippo (the new principal), and a few other college faculty would interview and hire teachers in the summer and enroll 400 students who, because of a court desegregation order, would come from all over the borough of Queens.

Why was my forecast so gloomy? My experience—and, in relation to how new settings get started, my experience is rather extensive—led me to one conclusion: *we do not know how to manage quick growth well.* And here was Saul describing a new setting that not only was expected to grow quickly but would also require integrating organizations (and their parts) differing in tradition, purpose and structure. The college, the school of education, the middle school (I.S. 227), the "downtown" headquarters of the city schools, and the court—these were a few of the entities that would have to be put together very quickly. I had every reason to be pessimistic and no reason to be optimistic.

Aside from the fact that the creation of new settings is conceptually and in practice an extraordinarily difficult task (the rate of success being very low), there was an additional feature in this project that did not bode well.[1] I refer to the history of college-school collaborations. In the past

two decades, there have been thousands of such relationships. Indeed, from the time that the Federal government began to fund public schools, it was a matter of policy to encourage college-school collaborations. The rationale was rather simple: college faculty had knowledge, derived from theory and research, that the schools needed to improve educational outcomes. Another part of the rationale, verbalized politely but clearly, was that the insularity of schools and their personnel was a large factor in the deterioration of their functioning. By encouraging and supporting college-school collaboration, parochialism would be lessened, new ideas would have a forum, and schools would improve. It has not worked out this way.

Given their frequency and the importance attributed to them, it is surprising how little discussion and evaluation there has been about college-school collaborations. I have participated in a number of these collaborations and I have had the opportunity to observe countless more. In fact, these experiences and observations were a major reason for my writing *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*.[2] I had come to see these collaborations as instances of "two cultures" interacting—that is, two cultures misunderstanding and clashing with each other. There are several reasons why these collaborations have received far less attention than they deserve. The first is that most of them have been failures and there is little inclination to parade failure in publication. Even where collaborations have met with some success (and there are some) and have been written up, the ingredients that contributed to success are so minimally described that one has a hard time figuring out why things went as they did. Often one is left with the impression that good intentions and good ideas are the necessary and sufficient ingredients for success, which is never the case because if they were, the rate of success would be dramatically higher than it has been.

But there is another factor why these collaborations have been so little discussed and so poorly reported, and that has to do with the inability or unwillingness to express attitudes that reflect disdain and even hostility, attitudes that are predictable when individuals from different cultures engage each other in serious work. One does not have to be especially knowledgeable or intuitive to realize that school personnel look at "outsiders" with suspicion. After all, their experience provides an actuarial basis for their expectations that outsiders are likely to be critics of schools and insensitive to what it means to work in schools on a daily basis. In the post-World War II era, our schools have been subject to a sustained barrage of criticism, with a good deal of it coming from academics. If school personnel have a poor opinion of themselves, it is in part a reflection of how they see themselves regarded by society at large.

When these outsiders are brought in, usually by top level administrators who consulted no one below them, it is hard for school personnel who are the "objects of change" to feel they are appreciated and competent. As one teacher said to me: "I know I have more to learn and I do not want to be made to feel that I am ignorant, and therefore should dutifully listen to and act on what an outsider thinks is the truth." For an outsider to approach school personnel without being exquisitely sensitive to their feelings and attitudes—even when these feelings and attitudes stem, as they sometimes do, in part from incompetence, insularity, and fear of the new—is to guarantee that the chances of having the desired effect will be very small.

In contrast to people in the school culture, faculty in the college or university culture have a far better opinion of themselves. Our centers of higher education have grown in size, support, and status since World War II. In the scores of studies done on the degree of respect and status accorded the different professions, university professors have always been near or at the top and school personnel near or at the bottom of the scale. That difference has not gone unnoticed by professors or school personnel. Unfortunately, professors tend to take this difference (and themselves) very seriously. When they work with school personnel, they tend to expect and to structure relationships in terms of superior-inferior, teacher-student roles. There is something self-defeatingly seductive in the role of "expert," not only for the ambivalence it engenders in the non-expert (better yet, inexpert), but for the insensitivity it can produce in people and their settings. Generally speaking, college faculty truly want to be helpful just as school personnel want to be effective. The problem is that the value judgements inherent in the distinction between "higher" and "lower" education—one is better, or more important, or more socially worthy than the other—are mirrored in the way relationships between people in the two cultures are perceived and structured when they interact.

Few things are as salient in the experience of school personnel as *time*. It is not only how time is allocated during the school day and the pressures it causes (the need to be punctual for classes, for bus and lunch duties and for filling out reports by specified dates), but also how the pressures build up, month by month, culminating in year-end achievement tests and promotions. The clock and the calendar are, for school personnel, tyrants in a way that they are not for college faculty. School personnel envy the time college faculty have for thinking, reading, and meeting. The very fact that a member of a college faculty can spend time in a working day in a school is perceived as a luxury that no school person has (except under very unusual circumstances). College faculty have

difficulty comprehending the role of time in shaping the thinking, motivations, and actions of school personnel. School personnel have trouble appreciating the value of discussing new ideas, examining the bases for what they do, and devoting themselves to new strategies—they take up precious time. More than time is involved, of course, but it is sufficient to illustrate how college-school collaborations can give occasion to the clash of cultures.

Much has been written on the ingredients needed for a successful collaboration. Very little has been written about university-school collaborations, and what has been is much clearer about the conclusions drawn than about the details of approach and interaction. James Comer has recently summarized this literature:[3]

> Regarding impediments to collaboration between schools and universities, the literature is rife with illustrations and explanations of the many factors that discourage or impede joint efforts. They range from a basic human/organizational quest for autonomy and self-direction to simple problems of communications between individuals or groups. Houston explains:
>
> > The interaction of relatively independent institutions leads to communication problems. Organizational units tend to limit the flow of information across unit boundaries . . . Lines of communication are known within institutions but no such clear channels exist in collaborative efforts.
>
> One of the problems which affects school-university efforts in particular is a difference in world views often found between the two groups. Metzner observes:
>
> > It seems very likely that the basic reason for the lack of success in school-university joint ventures is university and public school personnel have diametrically opposed views regarding both the dimensions of the problem and the basic aims and objectives of education.
>
> Furthermore, the language and work styles often vary significantly between university and public school personnel. One teacher participant in a collaborative pro-

ject voiced a sense of frustration by stating, "I was driven up a wall by the use of jargon and pretentious language . . . They never asked us what we wanted." Comer, describing his school-university project, cites fundamental differences in style or problem-solving approach as a source of ongoing difficulties.

> Social and behavioral scientists are trained to adopt a clinical or research approach to a problem, while educational practitioners are trained to apply a methodology or introduce new materials to solve the problem.

The training experiences of the two groups of professionals are described as so different from each other that a resulting "Tower of Babel" effect makes communication difficult on all levels. The existing literature offers a clear conclusion: collaboration, however implemented, results in both benefits and costs for public schools and universities.

Comer's view was in connection with a project to study three instances of university-school collaborations involving the same school system and three universities. It was a retrospective study utilizing interviews with samples of university and school personnel who had participated in one of the collaborations. His conclusions are worth quoting:[4]

> Clearly the presence of any new program in the life of the public school affects the ecology of the school. The present research suggests that a wide range of factors influence, in different and assorted ways, collaborative efforts between university and public school people.
>
> One recurring theme in the interviews with individuals from all three groups was the importance of developing and maintaining personal relationships among the collaborators. A key element in a successful working relationship between public school educators and university social scientists was believed to be the individual personality involved, not the organizational affiliation or training of the collaborators.
>
> The finding that the personal relationship among collaborators is crucial to success suggests that the selection process of both university and school people for collab-

orative efforts is critical. However, since in most situations entire schools or grades are involved in the collaborative efforts, the selection of the school staff can be extremely difficult. Therefore, the choice of university collaborators becomes increasingly important.

Our research shows that there is not a particular type of person best suited for a successful collaboration. School people offered a number of different criteria as important in a collaborator. Furthermore, many teachers regarded the differences that exist among collaborators as an asset to the program. A variety of collaborators, each with his/her perspective, allows for the greatest latitude in developing the critical personal relationships between educators and social scientists.

Furthermore, the involvement of the central administration of the school system is seen as critical to the success of the collaboration. Central administration participation, although integral to the success of the projects, is also somewhat problematic. Difficulties arise for collaborators when they are caught serving many masters.

The findings of this study indicate that there is not a clear cut manner in which any one factor other than the two previously mentioned clearly affect the collaborative process. The effect of collaboration on individuals and their institution is seen quite differently according to where the viewer is situated. We have learned that there is no singular view of collaboration and more than one perspective that needs to be taken into account in the planning and implementation of the collaboration.

I quite agree with these conclusions. Comer's report does not convey—it was not intended to convey—what these factors look like in the *sturm und drang* of collaboration. For example, Comer focused on a collaboration between a unit at Yale and two New Haven schools. One has to read Comer's account of that collaboration in his large volume *School Power* to get a feel for what his conclusions mean in actual practice.[5] Although the people Comer interviewed emphasize "individual personality," when one reads Comer's book one quickly sees how inadequate those words are for conveying the interrelationships between personality style, political power inherent in one's position, commitment to certain ideas and values, and, I would emphasize, some sense of the

complexity, unpredictability, and uncontrollability of the total situation of which one has become a part. That sense that one cannot or should not expect to have one's way; that sense that one is traversing an obstacle course paved with good intentions; that sense that one will be challenged and resisted; that sense that conflict is not to be avoided but to be overcome by compromise that does not violate your or others' sense of worth and integrity; that sense that the community takes precedence over victory through power—unless these ideas, values, and knowledge are wedded to personality factors one can only enjoy a pleasant relationship that is irrelevant for the purposes of collaboration. Indeed, one of the fascinations of the Queens-I.S. 227 collaboration is the variety of personalities that are represented, a variety that should not (and often did not) obscure communalities in the "senses" enumerated above. Personality devoid of these senses does not bode well for a collaboration. Comer's timely study, when taken together with his book, points out the need for more case studies of university-school collaborations. That need has to be met not only to serve as a foundation for people planning to engage in such collaborations, but also for public and private funding agencies seeking to foster university-school collaborations. If that need is not met, there is no reason to expect that the level of success of these collaborations, so crucial for the participants and society at large, will increase.

When President Cohen asked me to be a consultant to the project, I said yes far more out of friendship than out of any conviction that I could be helpful. Besides, I could give the project relatively little time and I knew neither the setting nor any of the participants. The truth is that what also intrigued me was that this project concerned a college-school collaboration *in a new setting*, and it is always hard for me not to get involved with a new setting.

The project did not fail and is not failing. Basically, I watched it from afar, occasionally meeting with the Queens College faculty and Mr. Sanfilippo, the school principal. I have visited the school on a number of occasions, meeting with diverse groups from within and without the school, learning first-hand what is meant by the label "community school" and what it should mean in practice. Why the project has not failed, which is not to say that it is an unalloyed success, will be obvious by the time the reader finishes this book.

In fact, if left to their own devices, the authors might not have written this book. "How," they asked, "could we write other than in a very personal way that would make it believable to others? Wouldn't people say that we are just describing our subjective impressions and experiences and why should that be read and accepted?" Fair question. In principle,

there were two other alternatives to relating the college-school collaboration. One was to have from the beginning a fleet of field workers who would observe and record the scores, varieties, and outcomes of interactions relevant to college-school collaboration. Aside from the fact that funding for that approach was never available, it is an approach beset with many problems, an example of creating one set of problems by solving or avoiding another. Another alternative was to have a group of people who would interview scores of people to determine how they participated in and were affected by the project, the interviewers presumably being less partisan than the writers of this book. That, too, was not fiscally possible. Instead, the authors endeavored to be as comprehensive and candid as possible, writing in the first person. Without their phenomenology—and that is precisely what is missing in most accounts of college-school collaborations—one is at sea, not knowing what to make of any event signalling direction.

What about replicability and generalizability? In one respect, this project is atypical, perhaps unique. Where do you find a relatively large, high quality (both in terms of students and faculty) college-university, of which the president is not only committed to the field of education and knowledgeable about it, but also expends a good deal of time trying to bolster it in ways that will produce new knowledge? Saul Cohen does not "tolerate" education as a field. He sees it as a window on society through which educators and social scientists can enlarge their understanding of the world we all live in. But if this project was initiated by an unusual person in *the* seat of power in a college, it is an atypicality that does not explain what happened after the project started. From that point on there is nothing that happened that in principle cannot be replicated or generalized to other college-school collaborations. What the authors do claim—and if they do not, I do—is that they accomplished a great deal: the forging of a productive, personally rewarding collaboration that, to a gratifying extent, overcame obstacles inherent in the interaction of people from two different cultures. This is what they attempt to describe, warts and all.

This project could not be carried out unless there was some funding from external sources for the released time of college faculty. Having said that, let me hasten to add that the level of funding (from the Board of Education and the Federal desegregation program) amounted to no more than two or three percent of the budget of I.S. 227. If, for example, you include in the school's budget fringe benefits and custodial salaries and costs, the funding of the project is closer to one percent (or less) of the school's budget. The amount of time that Queens College faculty put

into I.S. 227, willingly and eagerly, is not explainable by level of funding. If that funding continues to decrease, or even cease, the collaboration will continue, not because of altruism but because of self-interest.

A number of years ago some colleagues and I wrote a book, *Psychology in Community Settings.*[6] A good part of that book described the work of the Yale Psycho-Educational clinic in public schools. One of the chapters, written by Dr. Murray Levine, had the heading: "Teaching Is a Lonely Profession." The point of the chapter was that, although schools are among the most densely populated settings on Earth, the adult personnel in them experience loneliness. Of the many spontaneous reactions we got to the book, by far the most frequent was from teachers who essentially said, "You understand us." When you read the account of the Queens-I.S. 227 collaboration, particularly the interview with Professor Robert Edgar in the Appendix, you will get a poignant account of how loneliness on both sides of the collaboration was overcome. I believe that, to the degree that commerce between schools and their surrounds is low (insularity being the norm and resistance to more permeable boundaries continuing to be strong), there is no reason to expect improvements in the atmosphere or outcomes of schooling. That commerce can take different forms with different groups in the surround. Certainly our colleges and universities are potentially among the most helpful in this regard—i.e., helpful to schools *and* to themselves. That is why this book is so important, because it describes and explains how these collaborations can be developed, sustained, and made mutually productive, lessening that feeling of loneliness and providing a vehicle that makes the contemplation of change less threatening.

This is the time, to say the least, of limited and shrinking resources. The collaboration described in this book cannot be bought in the sense that if you have money, you can generate this kind of collaboration. I reiterate: money does not explain the degree and quality of the Queens-I.S. 227 collaboration. I am not arguing for poverty, nor do I take any satisfaction from budget cuts. But in our despair at what is taking place in education, let us not forget that during the period of affluence the track record of college-school collaborations—collaborations that too frequently were initiated precisely because of the carrot quality of money—was the opposite of impressive. In these difficult times there are things we can do and things we can learn.

# NOTES

1. Seymour Sarason, *The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1972.

2. Seymour Sarason, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*, Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 2nd edition, 1982.

3. James Comer, "Toward School Improvement: A Study of Collaborative Relationships Between Universities and Public Schools," final report to the National Institute of Education (NIE-G-80-0044), 1981.

4. Ibid.

5. James Comer, *School Power: Implications of an Intervention Program*, New York, The Free Press, 1980.

6. Seymour Sarason, M. Levine, J. Goldenberg, D. Cherlen, and E. Bennett, *Psychology in Community Settings*, New York, John Wiley, 1966.

# CHAPTER 2

# *The Collaboration*

**Sidney Trubowitz**
*Queens College*

It might be said that the Queens College-Louis Armstrong Middle School (I.S. 227) collaboration began in early 1979 as a result of a chance conversation between Saul Cohen, President of Queens College, and Frank Macchiarola, Chancellor of the New York City Public Schools. But agreements of this sort do not arise out of casual talk and passing suggestions. They emerge because circumstances and personalities have combined to provide a sympathetic reception to new ideas. The observation might also be made that the collaboration commenced on the day agreement was reached. But no collaboration between a college and a public school can develop without being affected by the past. To understand better how the collaboration began and what happened as the two institutions worked together, it would be helpful to look at the personalities involved, their motivations, the environments affecting their behavior, and the events that influenced what took place.

The collaboration between Queens College and I.S. 227 can be likened to a play. In both instances there is a cast of characters, all with particular traits that affect the course of events. Each character is molded by his/her own unique history. Each is influenced by the institution he/she represents. Each brings his/her own personality into play in dealing with others. We shall see how, in this collaboration as in a play, each character has a significant role to fill; to replace any character is to change how the story unfolds.

## *THE PEOPLE*

### The President

Saul Cohen has always been interested in education. He has written about schools, participated in government projects having to do with educa-

tion, and served on various national committees that have recommended improvements in education. He has also established a reputation for himself as a geographer. This fact is of no small importance, since his scholarly accomplishments have allowed him to gain credibility across campus among the so-called academic departments. In many liberal arts universities, interest and even achievement in the area of education will not aid a candidate in his quest for a college presidency, or help him once he has secured the position. Schools of education, for many reasons, continue to wield little power on liberal arts campuses.

The school of education's involvement in a school and the bureaucracy of which it is a part fitted with the presidential role Saul Cohen was seeking to shape for himself. He wanted to communicate his view that a mission of the college was to serve the city. It represented a sharp change from the stance of the previous administration, which valued and rewarded traditional scholarly exploration and talked about knowledge production rather than knowledge utilization. The view espoused by President Cohen was different in that he saw us taking what we knew about schools, applying it, and, in the process, learning more about education.

President Cohen was faced with a school of education faculty whose morale had been severely battered by mass firings during the 1976 New York City budget crunch and by the generally low status afforded it by the previous college administration. The extent of the decimation caused by the 1976 cuts is apparent in the fact that 67 faculty members were fired, 45 percent of the education staff. The impact of the firings goes beyond the numbers, since the result was that now only tenured professors were left, and the average age of faculty rose to almost fifty. Bitterness and disillusionment were widespread.

Verbal support would not have affected the education faculty's view of itself or the attitudes of others toward it. President Cohen, in the middle of the summer, prior to his officially moving into the presidency, asked for a meeting with the education faculty. This meeting took place in the home of the then Dean of Teacher Education, Marvin Taylor. Joining with President Cohen and the faculty was Seymour Sarason, a Professor of Psychology at Yale University, who has written extensively about the problems of schools. His reputation as a writer on education and the fact that he was a friend and colleague of Saul Cohen lent credence to the idea that education was important to the new President. The meeting was primarily cathartic, an opportunity to express pain over the destruction wrought in the school of education. But what mattered was that the new President had chosen the education faculty as the first college group with whom to meet, and had done so even before assuming office.

When Chancellor Macchiarola broached the idea of setting up a demonstration middle school at I.S. 227, he found a responsive listener in Saul Cohen. Here was a project that not only could give recognition to the school of education, but also fitted in with the President's own proclivity for action and for broadening the mission of the college. He displayed his interest in the I.S. 227 project by visiting the school, attending school functions, and asking about the progress of the collaboration.

The education faculty's self-esteem grew as the President provided the recognition that had for so long been absent. He named me College Director of the project, and also appointed me Associate Dean of Education. He called me at home to ask how things were going as we planned for the school opening and also suggested a book by Sarason for me to read. He sprinkled his messages to the college community with frequent references to the I.S. 227 project. In the same breath that he mentioned progress toward the development of a law school, he spoke of developments at I.S. 227. President Cohen and his wife attended the evening ceremony celebrating the opening of the school. They were among the first to arrive and the last to leave. The President met with a group of teachers and children touring the campus and answered their questions about his job. His interest was contagious. The college newspaper printed an article describing the school of education's involvement with I.S. 227. A member of the City University of New York (CUNY) Board of Trustees, in a commencement talk reviewing Saul Cohen's accomplishments in his first year as President, referred to the college's activities at I.S. 227.

Beyond the continuing psychological support offered by President Cohen, backing came very concretely as the college administration recognized and encouraged the fact that scheduling a professor to work in the schools equalled a teaching assignment. A full teaching load was no longer simply to be measured by the number of contact hours with students, but was broadened in definition to include working with school staff and communities.

As the education faculty grew in self-esteem, other departments changed their attitudes toward it. When the deans of the other divisions were asked to attend a meeting to discuss possible ways to cooperate with the functioning of I.S. 227, they all attended as though summoned by presidential mandate. A fight over new courses on the floor of the Academic Senate found the school of education standing its ground firmly and finally winning the battle. Morale rose as the President found ways of rewarding exemplary service in the field.

The college-public school collaboration project began with a President

who had a deep interest in education, who viewed serving the city as a major college commitment, and who knew how to offer support and recognition. For such a collaboration to be successful, it is clear that a necessary ingredient is the support and interest of the college president.

## The Chancellor

A decision or an act is seldom motivated by a single factor. Chancellor Macchiarola's move to join forces with the college had several antecedents. For one thing, he knew colleges, having been a professor at the CUNY Graduate Center. This experience influenced him to see colleges as allies rather than as adversaries. He was well aware of the bitterness that can grow between community school districts, having served as president of a community school board himself. He recognized that an impasse had arisen between Districts 24 and 30 regarding jurisdiction over I.S. 227, and decided to place the school under the direct control of the Central Board of Education. Another factor was that President Cohen and Chancellor Macchiarola had a common meeting point in Dr. Alan Gartner,[1] who had been a Queens College faculty member and had gone on to be director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Education (CASE) at the CUNY Graduate Center. When Dr. Gartner, whom Chancellor Macchiarola knew and respected, suggested that the Board of Education might collaborate with Queens College in running a school, he found a receptive audience.

Another factor motivating the Board of Education's involvement was NAACP litigation against it, calling for I.S. 227 to be integrated. Additional turmoil came from the controversy between the two community school districts about who should have jurisdiction over the school and from the differences among community groups about which children should attend. Chancellor Macchiarola saw the college as an aid to calming the situation. He showed his belief in the value of the college's involvement by providing financial resources to back up its effort.

## The Principal

Anthony Sanfilippo had been an employee of the New York City Board of Education for over thirty years. He has described himself as a bureaucrat; in his terms, it meant someone who followed orders, displayed loyalty to his superiors, and attempted to implement Board of Education curricula, mandates, and instructions to the best of his ability. He took pride in the system and resented those who would freely disparage the schools' efforts to educate.

His experience had given him "system smarts." When there was a

personnel problem, he knew immediately whom to telephone and the conversation invariably began on a first-name basis. When supplies failed to arrive, he knew the specific bureaucratic location to contact. He had a remarkable ability to maneuver the system to the school's advantage.

The fact that a few months previously his contract as district superintendent of the adjoining district was not renewed had an important effect on his behavior. It made him especially sensitive to the constituencies that had any role to play in evaluating the effectiveness of his performance as a school administrator. He felt that in his former position he had given insufficient attention to the need to gain the support of the groups involved in the educational process. He was determined that this time he would be effective at constituency building. He continued to believe that the administrator's role needed to be central, but this did not negate strong participation from parents, community, and college in the development of school policy. The opportunity to become head of I.S. 227—a demonstration school, a model school, the "Chancellor's school"—was "just what the doctor ordered." It enabled him to maintain a special kind of visibility as an educational leader. That this visibility helped is evidenced by the fact that he was recently rehired as Community School Superintendent of his former district. Taking the position of principal of I.S. 227 helped salve the wounds he had suffered in the political battle that cost him his job.

Mr. Sanfilippo had a high level of energy and gave it to the school. From eight in the morning to five in the afternoon he was meeting with teachers, planning new programs, talking with parents, and applying himself to the tasks of school administration. His role and his personality caused him to seek quick solutions to problems. His recent experience and his desire for support allowed him to listen to others and to refrain from hasty decisions.

Mr. Sanfilippo's knowledge of the system was crucial in allowing the school to open ready for children despite the fact that there was so little time to prepare. His desire to establish his reputation and his proclivity for new programs made him receptive to ideas emanating from the college and the community. He respected these groups and realized the need for cooperation. His bureaucratic loyalty led him to try with all his might to implement the design for the school agreed to by Queens College and the Board of Education, even though he may have disagreed with some of its elements. His combative and competitive nature made him alert to those who could assist in helping him to be the principal of a successful school. His experience and unique personality made for a principal who was especially equipped to launch a school in so short a time and to cooperate with a college in that effort.

## The College Director

An important reason for my designation as director of the college-public school project was that I had worked in the New York City public school system for seventeen years—ten of those years as an administrator. I also was very familiar with the college, having taught in the School Administration and Supervision Program and then acting as Chairperson of the Department of Graduate Programs and Educational Services for five years. My experience gave me knowledge of both public school and college as teacher and as administrator. I took the job because it was a chance to return to the field, to utilize the skills learned during seventeen years in public schools, and because I could satisfy my desire for action to go along with the teaching, thinking, and writing aspects of professorial life. It was also no small inducement that taking on the role of College Director meant that the President would appoint me Associate Dean of Education.

It is difficult sometimes to distinguish between value that is real and value that is merely symbolic. The symbolic, if it communicates strongly enough, has the same effect as the real. My history was of great symbolic value; the fact that I had been a principal created the view that I understood the problems of the city schools. This reassured the Board of Education personnel, from superintendents to the school principal and assistant principal, and removed the argument that, if put into words, might be: "Oh, he's one of those idealistic college professors who hasn't been near a classroom in twenty years. How can he understand?"

My knowledge of the system allowed me to understand without explanation the strictures of union regulations, the problems of administrative scheduling, and the restraints imposed by the bureaucracy. Some professors, for example, could not accept the idea that a New York City teaching license was necessary before someone could be accepted for a position. All these insider facts could be learned in time, but my immediate awareness helped to develop an empathetic bond between the school administration and myself.

Most important, I knew what it was to be a principal. The differences between a college professor and a school principal are enormous. A college professor is almost totally autonomous. A public school principal is besieged by pressures from all sides—from subordinates, parents, community groups, and teachers. Professors have little sense of time urgency. Schools with large student populations run by routine, and the clock is followed meticulously lest busses are missed, classes move into occupied rooms, and general logistic confusion reigns. It became one of my tasks to help college people become aware of what it is to be a school administrator.

My experience indicated that there could be only one head of a school.

This was supported by the confusion that resulted during a previous school-college project when a college-designated co-principal shared authority in the attempt to run the school. I knew also that a principal needed a compatible assistant principal with whom to work and I backed the principal's choice. My recognition of the practical and psychological realities of heading a school was a step in the development of trust between the principal and myself.

The choice of someone as College Director with an interest in public schools and a knowledge of both college and public school systems is crucial to the success of a collaboration. Giving concrete recognition for effective performance in the role serves to motivate even greater involvement. For if success brings recognition, recognition increases the likelihood of even more effort which leads to the likelihood of more success.

## The Dean of Teacher Education

The support and interest of the top leadership at the college meant resources for the college-public school project. The interest of the Dean of Teacher Education, John Lidstone, matched that of the President. The result was that education faculty became more and more aware of how important the collaboration was in the eyes of college administration. Dean Lidstone's actions communicated his interest. He visited the school often, served as direct liaison to the Central Board of Education on matters pertaining to the project, coauthored a project newsletter with the College Director, and held frequent meetings to assess project progress. His background as a public school teacher and administrator, along with his recent involvement in schools as a supervising professor and as a volunteer leader of a high school student film club, kept him informed on current school problems. His commitment to art education had much to do with the school's curricula including a strong art component. Dean Lidstone's role strengthened the college's investment in the project and further demonstrated the support of top leadership for college involvement with the public school.

It is difficult to communicate John Lidstone's contribution to the project simply in terms of concrete actions since his ability to give support has been remarkable. His availability, his readiness to listen, his positive attitude and his willingness to take on work having to do with the collaboration have given me a powerful ally. He has provided me a place to vent my frustrations and he has been a partner in exploring ideas.

## Professors

Professors hold different views regarding college involvement with public schools. There are those who have had negative experiences with the

Central Board of Education and who predict that any college involvement will become hopelessly enmeshed with red tape, short-sightedness, and unimaginative personnel. There are those who, like some members of the lay public, have been influenced by newspaper stories of school disorder, unsafe neighborhoods, and violence against teachers, and so prefer the protected confines of the college campus. There are those who have been removed from the public school classroom for so long that they are unsure of their skills and find security in the occasional visit as opposed to in-depth involvement. There are those who want to remain closeted in the college classroom because there they are better able to maintain a myth of omnipotence and to display charisma, entertain, and provide untested prescriptions for success. There are those who perceive that the university reward system discourages taking time from scholarly publishing for activity in the field. There are those who unconsciously may have lost faith in themselves because their ideas, when put to the test in the real world, have failed. They sense the public school's loss of confidence in them and have given up their efforts to effect change. There are those who have channeled their energies elsewhere and have learned to obtain financial and psychological rewards outside of the college. These are the professors active in consultant work, busy with private practice, or involved with the work of other organizations. But then there are also those who see themselves as doers, who are dedicated to implementing their views of improved education, whose entire faculty history has been one of working with schools, and who derive personal satisfaction from involvement in schools. The importance of selecting professors who would make positive contributions became clearer as the project progressed. Unwilling and unmotivated faculty participants (at first, some professors were assigned to the school as a way of filling out their schedules) became the carping critics who demanded attention that could have more usefully been directed elsewhere.

Dr. Clarence Bunch, Chairman of the Department of Secondary Education (another example of the involvement of the top leadership) and Professor of Art Education, was devoted to providing better art education for children. He had long been active in professional art education organizations. His role as Chairman allowed him to make I.S. 227 the center for art education student teachers, and he assumed personal responsibility for their supervision.

He is the guiding force behind the special art activities that emerged in the school. He was responsible for the establishment of the Louis Armstrong School and Community Arts Museum, a unique institution that vitalized curriculum not only in the arts but in other areas as well. He coordinated school and community personnel in a mural project—the

result, a large mural of Louis Armstrong and friends, now graces the entrance to the school. Dr. Bunch was involved in the collaboration from the start. When I left on sabbatical, he became the logical person to replace me, for there was no one more knowledgeable and deeply committed to the project.

Dr. Robert Edgar had been a professor at the college for over thirty years. During this time he had periodically been involved in field projects. But in the twilight of his career his commitment and involvement at I.S. 227 have been exceeded by none. He worked with the social studies teachers at the school, holding regular meetings, teaching in the classroom with them, accompanying them on trips, and joining them for dinner at each other's homes. He acted as a member of the Social Studies Department and spent at least three days a week at the school.

His way of working in the collaboration has become the model of professorial involvement to which I allude in describing the project to others. I point out that his schedule, which provided time for him to supervise student teachers and to work with school staff, has resulted in his seeming always to be at the school. He has given much and gained much from being part of the collaboration. Although he may soon retire from the college, he will not retire from I.S. 227. We have plans to keep him on as a consultant to the project.

Dr. Arthur Salz has always worked with public school teachers, in assisting them to be more flexible in their approaches, to make better use of space, and to give education more of an experiential base. His background fitted in with the plan to develop a program easing the transition from elementary to middle school and making for better use of a building structure that included movable walls and small conference areas.

Dr. Edith Grossman taught in the School Psychology Program. She was a clinical psychologist who had had much experience working with parents of children with special needs. She had previous contact with some of the school's parents of special education children through service she had given to Advocates for Children, a community group organized to support these parents in their dealings with the Central Board of Education. This experience was very useful in developing an atmosphere of trust in her work with the school's special education program.

There were other professors who came to the school, some to visit student teachers, others to gather research data, others bringing students to observe classes, and others to perform discrete tasks. But it was the professors introduced above who carved unique niches for themselves and made an impact on the school. They claimed ownership of their areas and were identified with their field of expertise. They became integrated

into the social fabric of the school. They moved in and out of classrooms and among children as would any teacher in the school.

## Community Program Coordinator

The school's design included the involvement of parent and community groups in the educational program of the school. It envisioned special activities for children from 8-9 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. and continuing education programs for adults. These programs were to be supervised by a coordinator. Funds to support such a position were not available until the second year of the collaboration when the college received an Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) grant from the United States Office of Education to maintain and promote integration at I.S. 227.

William Fibkins was hired as project director with responsibility for the recruitment of children, teacher training, community education, and for developing programs before and after school. Chapter 6 contains a detailed description of how the project was implemented. After a year, Dr. Fibkins left for another position. Monroe Cohen was selected to succeed him. Despite the fact that Federal funding continued for but one year more, we have been able to maintain our commitment to community education.

## Parents

Since 1969, when the New York City school system changed its method of governance by creating thirty-two decentralized school districts, parents in the borough of Queens have sought to exert influence over school matters. The parents at I.S. 227 were a vocal group with long experience in dealing with school officials. They had been part of the early history of I.S. 227 and expected to be involved in the development of school policy. Their previous experience had made them sensitive to anything that might be interpreted as giving them second-hand status in school matters. This sensitivity was evident in their concern that the college would attempt to run roughshod over their rights. Some of the parents who had children who had been in classes for the intellectually gifted were concerned with how their children would be dealt with in classes that were to be heterogeneously grouped.

Other college-public school projects have foundered on the inability of the participants to be responsive to and, when appropriate, to incorporate and utilize the views of parents. It is important to recognize that an essential part of the project's structure was the parent body.

## Teachers

They were New York City-licensed teachers of different ages and experience. Some came to I.S. 227 because of a desire to work in an exciting

atmosphere and others came to escape a chaotic situation. Some came because they had transfer rights based on seniority and others obtained a position because they were recommended by a college professor and had a specialty in an area of teacher shortage such as mathematics or science. They were a diverse group representing various levels of motivation, experience, and expertise.

## *THE INSTITUTIONS*

### Queens College

Queens College is one of the five senior colleges of the City University of New York. It has been described as the "jewel of the City University" because it has the best students and many distinguished professors. This reputation has made it the first choice for students applying for admission to the City University. The college is located in a lower-middle-class area of small private homes, a development sponsored by the electricians' union, and a middle-class housing development of two-family homes. The neighborhood remains generally middle-class, even though there has been some movement of welfare families into a location not too distant from the campus.

The college is easily accessible by automobile, being adjacent to the Long Island Expressway. It is less easily reached by public transportation, with only buses stopping nearby. The college is but ten minutes by car from the Nassau County border, and even before the state took over the responsibility for funding the city colleges (thus giving them a stronger rationale for working with schools outside of New York City), the School of Education regularly placed student teachers in suburban communities such as Great Neck and Merrick. But with few notable exceptions, student teaching and other contacts from the School of Education occurred in the nearby middle-class schools. Although convenience was one reason for not moving farther afield to low socioeconomic area schools, fear stimulated by sensational newspaper reports discouraged both faculty and students from initiating relationships with schools in Harlem, South Jamaica, or Bedford Stuyvesant. On those occasions when student teachers were assigned to a school in the inner city, it was not unusual for a distraught parent to telephone requesting a change.

Queens College is a liberal arts institution with a faculty that sees its primary mission as developing new knowledge. This was clearly borne out during the 1975-76 school year, when the College Committee on Institutional Priorities issued a report in preparation for dealing with severe budget cuts. This report downplayed those departments preparing

students for professions and highlighted the need for college faculty to pursue scholarly interests. Since there were professors to be retrenched, the instinct for survival strengthened this perspective. The final report supported a college administration with little respect for teacher education; the ultimate result was the mass firing of education professors. The attitude that prevailed then, and still exists to a degree, is that teaching is a vocation and students would be better prepared for that career at a teachers college. This point of view is far different from what is currently being expressed by some university officials, who recognize a responsibility by higher education to elementary and secondary schools, who see linkages between colleges and schools as necessary and who, like A. Bartlett Giamatti, President of Yale University, believe that "education is a continuous seamless web, or ought to be."

The second-hand status of the School of Education was reinforced by the way in which the reward system was applied. Although the three criteria of teaching, service, and publications were stated as the basis for giving promotions, the only one utilized was publications. The rationale offered for doing so was that teaching could not be measured and there was no objective way to assess service. The perception of some professors regarding service was that it had something to do with serving on a committee. In general, service in schools was looked on as something unpleasant that takes away from the real work of the professor, which is to do scholarly research. So intent were some liberal arts faculty on giving promotions based on this restricted viewpoint that they caucused privately to see to it that no education professors or professors sympathetic to education were placed on the committee that recommended promotions.

The initiation and development of the Louis Armstrong Middle School-Queens College collaborative project faced many obstacles. Some emanated from the School of Education, whose most recent experience in working with an inner-city school in an in-depth way had occurred over fourteen years ago. It emerged from a college that had ignored service in the field and whose reward system was designed to encourage people to write rather than to work in schools. The task then was to recognize the effect of these constraints, to identify professors who could be valuable in spite of the obstacles, and to develop support in the struggle to modify the attitude toward the worth of working with public schools.

## The Central Board of Education

This collaboration was in effect two collaborations. Besides being a partnership between a college and public school, it was also an attempt at having a college and a central educational agency work together. Colleges have had experience in dealing with public schools (albeit in a superficial

manner), but they have rarely become involved in any positive way with the educational bureaucracy itself in an effort to improve education. Evidence of the gap existing between colleges and the public school establishment was voiced at a 1981 summer institute sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, the organization of the 50-state education commissioners or superintendents to which, in a historic move, the top representatives of the nation's public and private colleges and universities were invited. A prevailing sentiment expressed at the meeting was that:

> In the past, the two factions—the schools and the colleges—spent much time attacking each other, and it often appeared that never the twain would meet to discuss their mutual complaints.[2]

The Louis Armstrong Middle School, unlike all other middle and junior high schools in the city, which were under the jursidiction of community school boards, was under the direct authority of the Central Board of Education. Since previous college-public school bureaucracy contacts had been mostly negative, it can be helpful to look at what happened between Queens College and the Board of Education in their attempt to collaborate at I.S. 227.

The Central Board of Education rules over the largest school system in the country. It has been besieged by crisis and criticism for years. In one instance, it is parents boycotting a school because of what they perceive as forced integration; in another case it is a protest against the Board's choice of a principal in opposition to the wishes of the community; in another situation the Board of Examiners promulgates lists for high school and junior high school principals and the Chancellor finds minority groups underrepresented, disapproves implementation of the lists, and the result is litigation. After so many years of reacting to disruption, it is little wonder that it seems that the administration of the city school system has developed a crisis-driven mentality and that the Board's actions frequently seem motivated by the need to solve an immediate problem. Although the agreement between the Board of Education and Queens College spoke of the development of a model school and the identification of ways of working with 10 to 14 year-olds that would be useful elsewhere, a pressing reason for reaching out to the college was the need to counter a suit by the NAACP accusing the Board of having maintained a nearby school as segregated.

The tendency to solve immediate problems with expedient measures continues to exist. The result is that even though individuals at the Central Board speak of the design of I.S. 227 and the dream of developing

a demonstration school, bureaucratic actions deliver another message. When there was a need for space to house special education students, I.S. 227 became the solution and little thought was given to whether the children to be assigned would be in keeping with the design of the school, which called for racial integration and an entering pupil population of 10 or 11 year-olds. What happened was that students, mostly from minority groups and ranging in age from 13 - 15 years, were arbitrarily placed in the school.

A conflict of goals between the Central Board of Education and Queens College existed from the start. When college personnel spoke of the total development of the child, Board of Education representatives focused on the basic skills. When Queens College professors insisted on placing emphasis on the arts, a Board of Education spokesman responded by stating that "lofty goals" hardly represented what was needed by the city's school children. The general public measured school success in terms of reading scores. The Board of Education, as a public agency and attuned to political realities, saw its primary educational goal as helping children to obtain survival skills. They were interested in programs that might provide panaceas; they were less interested in the development of a total school environment that might help children become more fully themselves. When I mentioned to a Board administrator that we would have available the services of a nationally known writer on education, a writer noted for his special ability to conceptualize problems and to identify approaches to these problems, the first response I received was, "What program can he offer us?"

Another problem in working with the Board was that the people in key positions often changed. One way the bureaucracy dealt with crisis situations was to move people around. As a result, when a problem arose in Manhattan, the solution was to shift the Board superintendent assigned to be the link to the Queens College-I.S. 227 project to handle the difficulty. Some months later another liaison superintendent was rotated to a position at Central headquarters. So far there have been six different superintendents assigned as liaisons to the project. The result of this changing leadership has frequently been incomplete or garbled communication.

The number of different divisions within the Board of Education was another factor that caused confused communication. One division, Special Education, seemed to operate as a separate entity. It was beset by serious problems and the result was that leadership seemed to change almost monthly.[3] Meetings were difficult to set up and when they occurred, they were with people other than those with whom it was arranged. Promises were made and not kept. Letters and telephone calls

remained unanswered. Although this division may have represented an extreme case, there were other divisions with which it was difficult to maintain communication. When we asked for assistance from our Board liaison, even that person encountered difficulty in extracting clear answers from the Budget Bureau, the Legal Division, or the Division of Special Education. Getting answers in writing appeared at times to be impossible. The problem then was maintaining communication despite the obstacles of size and shifting leadership.

Difficulty also arose because the Board had had little experience in working with colleges on such projects as the Queens College- I.S. 227 venture. The idea of consulting with the college on the assignment of children, selection of teachers, and size of the school population was a new one. Some resented changing normal procedures to allow college input. When the college complained about not being involved in certain decisions, it was told: "If Queens doesn't like it, we'll just get another college." In other cases, habit dictated unilateral action and unintentional omission of the college's voice. Some tried to include the college as a full partner, but collaboration was something both the college and Board of Education had to learn how to do. For example, there were curriculum resources available in the form of college professors, supervisors from the Bureau of Curriculum Development, consultants from the State Department of Education, and specialists working in various Board programs. The problem in the collaboration was how to coordinate resources so that they were not duplicative or working against each other.

Another obstacle was confusion regarding how people in different roles would operate. This confusion was apparent one day when a single teacher was observed in the classroom by the Board superintendent, the principal, and a professor. There was a need to define areas of responsibility and to determine in what way they would be implemented.

Despite the obstacles, there was a desire on the part of the Board and the college to make the collaboration work. The Board showed its support for this intention by giving the college financial backing for its work at the school.

There were also others in key roles such as Dr. Al Oliver, Assistant to the Chancellor, and Dr. Helene Lloyd, Assistant Superintendent at the Board of Education, who shared the dream of developing a school for 10 to 14 year-olds that would have parents clamoring to gain admission for their children. They were consistent in their support of the project.

At the beginning the aim was to learn how a college could best work with a public school. In the course of events, the aim became broadened to include learning how a college could best work with a large public school bureaucracy.

## *THE SETTING*

The Queens College-Louis Armstrong Middle School collaboration took place in Queens. This circumstance made a difference in that it allowed the possibility of integrated education, since the borough had supplanted Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn as the city's largest melting pot. The 1970 census figures revealed the richness of difference that existed in Queens: 1,695,288 whites; 258,006 blacks; 12,855 Chinese; 6,100 Japanese; and 1,840 American Indians. There were also 153,691 of Hispanic origin, of whom 33,141 were Puerto Rican. The data told us that integration was an issue, that intergroup relations merited attention, and that rich resources were available for curriculum development. This racial mixture encouraged the college to apply for and to receive a U.S. Office of Education grant to maintain and promote integration of the Louis Armstrong Middle School during the first year of the project.

Queens had become the city's major stronghold of the middle class and of the poor with middle-class aspirations. It had become the sanctuary for the tens of thousands who fled deteriorating neighborhoods in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx to swell its population to some two million—larger than that of Philadelphia, Detroit, Houston, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Atlanta, Kansas City, Denver, or Cincinnati. Only Los Angeles and Chicago have more residents. This, too, made a difference, for these upwardly mobile parents demanded the right to be heard in school matters. The collaboration between the college and the public school recognized the need to include parents.

Queens may also represent the most varied ethnic mixture in the nation. Astoria probably has the largest Greek community in the Western Hemisphere. In the high-rise complexes of Forest Hills one hears Hebrew, Japanese, Hindu, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, French, Hungarian and Turkish. In Flushing, a Baptist church conducts Sunday services in Chinese and Spanish as well as in English. All this in addition to the major strains of Italian, Irish, Jewish, Polish, and German. There are also smaller groups of Lithuanians, Latvians, Haitians, Vietnamese, Arabs, Yugoslavians—and even some 17,000 Maltese. The school itself represented 58 countries and 33 languages, and so it had to be sensitive to different cultural influences—boys who looked at learning to do modern dance as not in keeping with their macho upbringing; girls whose families saw little value in extended educational opportunity for females; parents who were torn between allowing their children to be independent and to move into the mainstream of American society or holding them close and providing education in neighborhood parochial schools. Although some parents were wary of the school, they were potentially a valuable resources for they could teach about different foods, music, and history.

The school's setting made a difference. The fact that the Louis Armstrong Middle School, a typical urban school, was but twelve minutes by car from the college, that parking was relatively easy, that there was ample space for meetings with teachers and for the storage of materials, and that there was an attractive physical plant encouraged the participation of college faculty. The residential quality of the neighborhood, with its well-kept one- and two-family homes, avoided any distorted perception of drug traffic, filthy streets, and rampant violence. That erroneous views can cause difficulty is attested to by professors who will not go to Harlem schools, failing to recognize that there are some well-maintained sections in that area.

It also made a difference that businesses and a bank functioned in the immediate vicinity of the school. As college personnel and public school staff bought lunch at the delicatessen across the street or had a beer at the corner bar, relationships developed and the business people became eyes to watch over the children and to protect the building at off-school times. The bank down the block was convenient for teachers and became a source of financial support for block parties and mural painting.

I.S. 227 stood on the boundary line between the black and white communities. Its location symbolized the possibilities for how the school might function—as a place that brings people together or as one that causes differences to be expressed as hostility.

A small triangle of grass with a few trees was located opposite the main entrance of the school. Discarded bottles and general disarray diminished the possibility of community residents relaxing on the park benches. This vest-pocket park presented an opportunity for the collaboration to demonstrate that it could improve the community rather than cause its deterioration. Students, student teachers, teachers, city officials, and community representatives began to work to improve its appearance.

A setting is made up of more than its physical characteristics. It also includes community feelings and attitudes. This was especially true of the community surrounding I.S. 227, since the history of the school's development was long and filled with events causing anger and distrust. To understand the college-public school collaboration and how the community perceived the Louis Armstrong Middle School, it is essential to look at what preceded the school's opening.

## *THE HISTORY*

The creation of the centrally administered Louis Armstrong Middle School was the result of long and bitter conflict. Plans for the school originated in 1967. When the site was selected, the surrounding community was integrated. But soon the demographics of the community

changed so as to preclude the possibility of opening it as an integrated neighborhood school. Although I.S. 227 was located within the boundaries of Community School District 30, the original design for the school made provision for the enrollment of students from an overcrowded area in neighboring District 24. The control and use of the proposed school were hotly contested by both districts. Each explored many possibilities for tenanting the facility, but no agreement could be reached. When District 30 proposed utilizing the school as a magnet school for gifted children, members of its own community erupted in violent opposition for they felt many of their own children would be excluded. When there was talk of using the school to relieve overcrowded segregated schools in District 24, some elements of the community developed visions of disruptive minority group children descending on the neighborhood. The inter- and intra-district antagonism engendered by the fight for control finally led to the Central Board taking the precedent-setting step of placing the school under its control.

Prior to the opening of I.S. 227 in September 1979, Chancellor Macchiarola and the Central Board of Education were well aware that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had filed suit against District 24, alleging that community school officials were responsible for creating segregated school conditions. Judge Sifton found that sending minority students from I.S. 61 in District 24 to two specially created annexes in neighboring District 25, violated the rights of the plaintiff under the equal protection clause of the Federal constitution. I.S. 227 became part of the solution. The Chancellor mandated it to be an integrated school with a student population whose racial composition would reflect the racial cross section of the borough of Queens (45 percent white and 55 percent minority). The plan called for children to be recruited from the entire borough, with the provisions that priority be given to relieving overcrowding in I.S. 61 and that no child could be taken from a school in which his/her removal would result in disrupting the integrative pattern of that facility. Thus an exhaustive recruitment effort became necessary. The success of that effort was due in no small part to the public's awareness of Queens College's participation.

The community was angered that neighborhood children were, in many instances, not admitted to the school. The need for an integrated school population prevented many minority group children in the immediate school vicinity from gaining admission. This anger became compounded with the confusion that arose as recruitment circulars and advertisements called for parents to register their children at the school. The community also feared that adolescent youngsters from distant areas would cause damage as they wandered to and from school.

Other schools looked with disfavor at the emergence of the Louis

Armstromg Middle School. With fewer children in elementary and junior high school and talk of school closings spreading, the loss of children to another school represented a danger. At the least, enrollment decrease could mean losing teachers. It was not altogether surprising that recruitment material got "lost" and recruitment teams were not always welcomed warmly.

The Queens College-I.S. 227 project began in a time of diminishing resources. Budget cuts meant a loss of teachers and fewer supplies. It was little wonder that other schools and districts expressed irritation and envy at what appeared to be the overflowing resources of I.S. 227. In fact, the funds provided by the Central Board were no larger than what other schools received. But the presence of student teachers and college faculty added to the resources available to the school.

The effects of history, although they may lessen in intensity over time, do not disappear easily. Even though the local chapter of the NAACP applauded the efforts at developing an integrated school, some bitterness remained that not all local children were being served. Other schools still perceived I.S. 227 as a threat to their enrollment, even as they became resigned to its existence. The results of Judge Sifton's decision were hardest to erase since it modified the school's design, which called for children to enter at grade five. Since he mandated the movement annually of sixth graders from nearby I.S. 61 into I.S. 227, this precluded the possibility of admitting children in any appreciable numbers into the fifth grade. It is clear that judicial decisions affect schools more than we might first expect.

This project was built on a foundation made up of people, the institutions which they represent, the setting in which it took place, and the local history. As we examine the way in which the project progressed, it will be evident that the foundation, which was built before the beginning of the collaboration, continues to influence what happens.

## NOTES

1. Dr. Gartner has since been appointed Executive Director of the Division of Special Education of the New York City Central Board of Education.

2. Fred Hechinger, *New York Times*, August 11, 1981.

3. For the school years 1981-82 and 1982-83, a measure of stability was achieved as Dr. Alan Gartner took over the role of Executive Director of the division. He has, however, recently resigned and we are faced with still another change of leadership.

CHAPTER 3

# *Before the School Opens*

**Sidney Trubowitz**
*Queens College*

The word came through without warning. President Saul Cohen and Chancellor Frank Macchiarola had met and the decision was made that we were going to "help establish" the Louis Armstrong Middle School. After eight years of a building standing empty, the President and Chancellor had agreed to open the school as a collaborative venture between the Board of Education and Queens College. The leadership of the School of Education was called in to discuss the proposal to collaborate. But in reality, there was only one reply possible since the President wanted it, the Dean of Teacher Education favored it, and many education professors welcomed the idea since it gave further evidence of the President's interest and provided the opportunity to grapple with an idea education professors had long discussed: the possibility of a place where children could meet with adults to find learning, respect, joy and life. But before the vision could be realized, there were many tasks to accomplish and many problems to overcome.

## *PROBLEMS*

### Lack of Time

Foremost among the problems was the brief period left before the school was scheduled to open. At the time (March 1979), I wrote in my journal:

> I feel queasy about the time left to us. It seems a fantasy that by September the school be open for children. The extent of things to be done staggers the imagination—a Principal to be hired, also an Assistant Principal, teachers, secretaries; a curriculum and an organization to be designed; supplies to be ordered; a pre-service summer

institute for teachers to be developed and implemented; children to be recruited. I'd better stop thinking or I'll stop dead in my tracks.

My uneasiness about the lack of time was supported by a visit to a community school superintendent with much experience in the opening of new schools. He said, "It takes at least 18 months to plan and develop a school. In less time, it's impossible."

There were other voices testifying to the foolishness of our decision. There was direct opposition in the voice of a professor who noted, "We're being pushed too fast. If we take the project on, we'll fall flat on our faces. You can't operate under a crisis mentality. I don't want any part of it." From everywhere—from principals, superintendents, the electrical and plumbing contractors who continued to work on the building—we were warned of the impracticality of attempting to open the school by September. Even though we did not have the leisure to discuss at length or to project long-range solutions, even though we could only confront the most immediate problems and try to get rid of them as quickly as possible, we learned that the press of time had its compensations. It forced us to accomplish great amounts of work in brief periods. It provided us with flexibility in that we did not become wedded to any prescribed plan and we could modify our actions depending on circumstances. It made us forsake the usual route taken in the School of Education and to involve only those faculty who expressed interest. We did not make the proposed collaboration a topic for total consideration by the School of Education. Past experience warned us that such discussion could drone on interminably. Our view of democratic procedure did not include involving faculty in every decision. Rather, we established the principle that involvement in the project was voluntary and to be based on desire to participate and ability to contribute.

The shortness of preparation time allowed us to maintain the idea that our view of education for middle school children was the right one.[1] It permitted us to keep our idealistic, and perhaps extravagant, conception of the prospects for the future. It did not give us the leisure for lengthy and belabored introspection that might have identified gaps and raised doubts. It allowed us to be naive regarding the difficulties involved and to plunge headlong into the project. If we had had the opportunity to plan thoroughly and to look back to past experience, the likelihood is that we would not have had the gumption to try. It was as though we believed that we could fly, and we did.

The lack of time had the added advantage of allowing imperfection to exist. When breakdowns occurred and everything was not in perfect

shape, it was accepted and understood that it was because of the hurried way in which the school was put together. Limitations can stimulate the imagination, which can become lethargic when all means are placed at its disposal. As a result, when we found that the Central Board was unable to get books to the school library, a few teachers and some members of the college staff took a van to the college library and collected little-used children's books and transported them to the school library. When an electricians' strike prevented the installation of bells, teachers arranged to rely on wrist-watches to move children from class to class and the school became a school without bells. There has been no subsequent attempt to get the bells installed, for everyone liked the departure from traditional institutional procedure.

## Different Value Systems

The collaborative venture began with a series of meetings with the Board of Education representatives to develop a written plan for the school. We saw quickly that differences in values would be a problem. The Board representatives wanted the school to give special emphasis to the skills. They reacted with patronizing tolerance to the college's proposal that the arts have equal status to other subject areas. There was an underlying antagonism to the "ivory-towered" professors who knew little of the practicalities of schools and the political realities of urban education. The Board officials believed in the status quo, for what existed was what they created. Theirs was the world of lesson plans, developmental lessons, aims written on blackboards, and a system of rewards and punishments based on administrative approval and disapproval. At various times during the collaboration some Board personnel reacted with disbelief to the idea that teachers could send letters to parents and outside groups without first getting approval from the principal, that teachers need not submit detailed plan books each week for administrative inspection, and that reading programs without basal readers were possible.

Value differences caused conflict throughout the collaboration. Some union representatives on the planning group were wary of parent and community involvement, seeing such involvement as intruding on professional prerequisites. Parents of children who had been in classes for intellectually gifted children questioned the concept of heterogeneous grouping. Elements of the community wanted the school to be open for all neighborhood children, while the advocates of integration supported the need to recruit from all over Queens to obtain the necessary mix of children. A visiting reporter from the *New York Times*, interested in college involvement with public schools, predicted that a free-for-all would develop as conflicting interests and points of view abraded.

## Attitudes of College Faculty

Although many professors reacted positively to the proposed collaboration, there were some who expressed skepticism. They spoke words of sarcasm formed by years of frustrating interaction with New York City schools. They said, "I hope there are a lot of easy exits out of the building and out of the project," and, "There had better be a lot of security guards around." There were others who wanted nothing to do with the project. They were the professors who stated, "I'm too busy to get involved." There were some professors whose perception of a college working with a public school was limited to offering courses on campus to upgrade a teacher's instructional capability. These faculty members provided little support, although they did not actively interfere with the progress of the collaboration. There were others who responded cautiously, since becoming involved in a public school venture meant putting their philosophies, resources, and abilities on the line. They questioned whether we had enough time, whether we would fall flat on our faces and repeat the experience of practically every other college that had attempted to work with a public school. There were even a few professors who would have preferred to see the project fail so that their own past failures with the Board of Education would take on an air of inevitability. The professors who caused the greatest problems were those who accepted assignments and then proceeded to project superior airs, to question the value of the collaboration, and to focus on things to criticize. It became clear that faculty who would work in the school needed to be chosen carefully, and that expression of interest and the ability to work in the field were essential.

## Developing the Design

At first, no one seemed to have a clear idea as to what the school was all about. The Chancellor mentioned career education as a primary goal. A Board of Education official described the school's focus as language and culture. The words "magnet school" continued to be used as a holdover term from discussions between Districts 24 and 30. The Dean and the Chairpersons of the School of Education met for long hours to develop a view of the school not for the purpose of arriving at a final, detailed description of what ought to be, but to have a general plan as we negotiated an understanding with the Board of Education.

Our plan for the school called for a racially integrated pupil population, a curriculum that gave equal attention to basic skills and the arts, an extended day school, a strong community component, grades five through eight, and a gradual transition from a "family" type of grouping

in the fifth grade to a more departmentalized situation in the eighth grade. Our ideas came from our values and from our years of working with schools.

Although we did not dwell on past experience, one fact stood out boldly from a previous school-college relationship known as the School University Teacher Education Center (SUTEC): two people could not run a school.[2] The task of leading the school on a day-to-day basis belonged to the principal. Taking the risk of giving this power to a representative of the bureaucracy demonstrated our belief that trust among participants was necessary. Insisting on co-principals could be interpreted as saying, "We don't trust you." Entering into a collaborative relationship, whether it be between individuals or organizations, involves taking a chance.

Another step consistent with creating clear lines of authority and of communicating trust was supporting the principal's choice of assistant principal. This was quickly done.

We sought constantly to define our role so that our accountability would be clear. The difficulties in doing so manifested themselves immediately. Newspaper reports had the college "taking over" a public school, "creating a definitive model for middle school education," and "turning education around." Public announcements from college officials and others spoke of our doing things that had never been done before. School personnel at I.S. 227, as in schools elsewhere, hampered as they were by diminished resources, were primarily interested in the college providing services. An illustration of this attitude was a decision (subsequently rescinded) to remove guidance services from the school since the college was providing counselor education interns. Although we recognized the appropriateness of giving help through interns, student teachers, and college faculty, we rebelled at the perception of the college having as its major function filling the gap left by inadequate resources. We were most interested in identifying the problems pervasive to the education of early adolescents and in finding ways of educating 10 to 14 year-olds that could be useful elsewhere. The Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades was established. The Center was structured to provide the college with an organization facilitating exploration into such areas as curriculum, teacher education, child development, family and community life, and adult education. Its existence allowed the possibility of working with other schools. It provided us with a vehicle to study what had occurred and to introduce projects without necessarily having to guarantee success. How roles ultimately were filled and how relationships developed were shaped by the behaviors and personalities of the individuals involved. But the development of job descriptions and the

structuring of the Queens College Center were steps in the direction of giving meaning to the term "collaboration."

## The Problem of Trust

The development of trust was no easy task, since colleges and public schools usually take adversarial positions when they work together. Even though the norm for each group is to seek gain for its own constituency and for self-interest to be paramount, our goal was to convince others that no one at the college would in any way seek unfair advantage. We knew that trust is built more by actions than by words, that no single action would be sufficient in itself, and that time would be needed for skepticism regarding our intentions to disappear. A first step in the development of a sense of confidence in each other was arranging to share experience. This process was facilitated by having the principal of the school join the college staff as adjunct professor in the Administration and Supervision Program. All through the collaboration opportunities were sought for public school staff to teach at the college. The result was that Louis Armstrong Middle School teachers taught late afternoon classes in language arts and science. They were used as guest speakers in other college classes. This flow of expertise from public school to college gave credence to the idea that, although the college felt it had much to give, the college also had much to gain from the collaboration. Having college classes taught on-site also contributed to this belief. As roles became merged, with principal becoming professor and teachers becoming instructors, opportunities for dialogue increased, role differences blurred, and people communicated from a base of shared experience.

In the months before the school opened, contact among groups was frequent. There were months of meetings—meetings between Board of Education personnel and college faculty to formalize the agreement; meetings to define school goals; meetings of parents and community representatives that became occasions for the venting of past grievances; and meetings of parents of children in special education classes to voice their concerns.

After emerging from a week's tangle of meetings, I sometimes wondered what was being achieved, where we were headed. Yet, the endless meetings served a purpose. They provided contact among the individuals who would work to get the school organized. A committee of parents, Board representatives, and myself was selected to choose the principal. We met day after day and some nights to read resumes, select candidates, and conduct interviews. Over sandwiches and coffee, as we developed criteria for the position, and as we discussed the different candidates, communication was established. I came to know the women who subse-

quently became co-presidents of the Parent-Teachers' Association and those who ultimately assumed other leadership positions.

The development of trust among groups demands constant attention. As college personnel had more and more contacts with parents, teachers, and administrators, both in informal and formal situations, our personal and professional credentials became more accepted. We recognized that trust is fragile and a single action, perhaps misunderstood, could have profoundly destructive consequences. Despite over two years of experience indicating otherwise, parents still express concern that the college will run roughshod over their rights. The only difference is that this concern is now expressed openly.

## The Problem of Developing Relationships

Anthony Sanfilippo was appointed principal of the Louis Armstrong Middle School at the end of June, just two months prior to the scheduled opening of the school. If the collaboration between Queens College and the school were to be successful, nothing would be more important than that the relationship developed between the leaders of each group become one that was supportive rather than threatening, enhancing rather than detracting, respectful rather than demeaning. What helped was a recognition on the part of Mr. Sanfilippo and myself that we had common interests. We both realized that if the college and public school were to work successfully together, it would enhance both our reputations. This recognition allowed us to look beyond value differences for ways to support each other, for ways to make each other look good.

We initiated a flow of communication that was constant. It began with a telephone call congratulating Mr. Sanfilippo on his appointment and continued with daily conversations. We respected each other's role and made every effort to keep each other informed. We made gestures of goodwill. Mr. Sanfilippo made it a point to list my name on circulars emanating from the school. I agreed to be a guest lecturer at the college class he was teaching. We participated together in the summer workshop for teachers. The fact that three trusted members of Mr. Sanfilippo's cabinet had been students in Administration classes I had taught and spoke positively about me also helped to lower barriers. He began to use me as a sounding board for his frustrations and irritations. It became possible for me to make suggestions regarding how he might have handled certain situations differently. It became even clearer to me how lonely the position of principal is and how little the person who fills the role experiences spontaneous, unconstrained feedback.

There were others with whom relationships needed to be established: teachers, parents, Board of Education representatives, and members of

the community. In each case, it took time to create an atmosphere in which each could see the other's point of view, to recognize that each constituency had an interest in the school and a right to a voice in its operation.

Other problems emerged during this period and continued to demand attention throughout the collaboration. There was the problem of other schools and their anger at us for drawing pupils away, for representing competition for diminishing resources, and for raising questions regarding how 10 to 14 year-olds were presently being taught. Recruiting pupils to an integrated setting raised the problem of busing and introduced the paradox in which minority group children might be denied admission while white children were actively being sought. There were the effects of judicial decisions regarding integrating pupil population and providing for the children with special education needs.

## *EVENTS*

The course of the collaboration was not significantly changed by any single event. But some events revealed the pressures affecting the collaboration. The following examples are taken from the diary I kept since the project began.

*July 9, 1979.* A curriculum committee meeting takes place at I.S. 227. In attendance are parents, college faculty, Mr. Sanfilippo and myself. There is no such thing as a single parent voice. I am struck by their diversity. These are parents concerned with education for the gifted; some focus on plans for the handicapped; others see themselves as advocates for integration.

One articulate parent takes copious notes of the proceedings. She asks about what plans we have for children gifted in mathematics. I suggest some possibilities to her. But these are possibilities, not certainties. Much remains to be planned and implemented. The design for the school calls for heterogeneous grouping, and yet the likelihood is that many teachers are not prepared to deal with individual differences. I find that all curriculum questions are being directed at me as though the college will be totally responsible for curriculum development. We need to get roles and responsibilities sorted out.

Another parent who works with a special education advocacy group asks, "When can we begin to find you accountable, Mr. Sanfilippo?" She defines accountability as finding fault.

Another parent insists on recalling the turmoil between Districts 24 and 30. He indicates that he intends to be a watchdog, making certain that the school adheres to the integration plan.

I wonder at the skills needed to deal effectively with parents—the need to listen well, to be responsive, and to deal with them as individuals. It seems clearer than ever that the collaboration needs to include parents as partners. I realize also, as I discuss the meeting afterwards with Mr. Sanfilippo, that by serving as his confidant, as someone to whom he can let off steam about such things as a teacher's failure to fulfill responsibility or a parent's rudeness, I can provide him with someone principals rarely have—i.e., someone to talk to. We begin to build lines of empathy between us.

*July 10, 1979.* I meet with a Queens College professor who asks whether the goal of the school is teacher training or curriculum development. For a moment the question stumps me. The goal is more than any one slice of things. It is to have a good school. It is to identify those factors that make for good education for 10 to 14 year-olds. But then what is a good school? In the eyes of many parents it is to have the children do well in their skill subjects. And so it is in the eyes of all of us. But a good school is more than the mastery of skills. It should be more a place where interest and curiosity are aroused, talents unleashed, creativity fostered, and sentiments and tastes refined. Research on any single variable can only account for part of what is a good school. We need to work on single fronts but more important we need to recognize the complexity of schooling. We need to move forward on all fronts simultaneously. So I cannot say we are to focus on teacher training or curriculum development but rather on both and how they affect each other. The professor walks away dissatisfied and I realize that unanimity of approach from whatever the group is not likely.

*July 11, 1979.* I get a note from a Queens College professor recommending two graduates of the Queens College Administration and Supervision Program for the Assistant Principal vacancy. The recommendations are for two bright people with pleasant personalities. But the professor who recommends them is ill-informed. The candidates have neither the emotional or physical strength to be effective administrators in a large urban school. The ability to write poetry and to demonstrate sensitivity is not enough. We needed to find the combination of someone who could jump with force into the day-to-day tasks of administration and, at the same time, have vision and perspective. I needed to be a mediating force between college and public school, filtering out the unrealistic and the impractical from what might be worthwhile and meaningful.

*August 4, 1979.* In but a short time a staff has almost been hired; a school is almost ready to be opened. Each move has demanded an outpouring of energy. Teachers have been hired quickly. Mr. Sanfilippo

and I had spent hours interviewing teaching candidates. College faculty had volunteered their time to read the hundreds of resumes that had been submitted and to suggest people to be interviewed. Letters had been sent out and decisions were made. The feelings of some professors were ruffled. Many had visions of building a staff unencumbered by restrictions. They were not aware that the United Federation of Teachers contract only permitted a certain amount of leeway in hiring teachers and, when union demands were accounted for, we were left with the freedom to hire only a few teachers. A health education professor became angry when Mr. Sanfilippo pointed out that the school could not afford to hire a teacher to teach only health education but rather, there was a need to get someone who could deal with physical education as well. The argument reflected a dispute that had gone on within the college Department of Health and Physical Education where professors had fought over the relative importance of each specialty. Another professor wanted his best graduate student hired and was chagrined when this was not possible. I am left with the task of mending fences back on the college campus.

*August 6, 1979.* A Board of Education official says to the Assistant Principal that he will be fired if he publicly questions the pupil selection process. I'm startled at the lack of respect, the insensitivity. It exemplifies one bureaucratic mode of thinking that operates solely on power and permits the threatening of subordinates. I begin to see how difficult it may be for the school administration to question authority. It indicates another role the college can fill since there is nothing preventing us from confronting ineptitude and inefficiency wherever and whenever it occurs.

*August 21, 1979.* A *New York Times* reporter has asked to visit the school. Mr. Sanfilippo suggests we ask him to come on a day when he can see a special part of the orientation program for teachers. He becomes irritated and refers to "professorial naiveté" when a college faculty member says that the reporter could come on any day and see what is naturally occurring. The incident highlights a view of public relations that places great emphasis on image. It also indicates an attitude toward academicians. A bit later, I kid Anthony about the phrase he used and remind him that he is a professor too, since he teaches a college course. He laughs and I find we can relax together. I also see that the collaboration can take the form of disagreement.

*August 28, 1979.* Mr. Sanfilippo had to inform a teacher we had interviewed and thought highly of that she could not be kept on staff. She had been recommended by a college professor and she was a minority group member. We lost an opportunity to develop better relations with a college department and we were minus an Hispanic teacher who could provide a model for our Hispanic children. There was a cold-hearted

justice involved since the position was given to a teacher excessed from another school. But, a large bureaucracy operates by the rule book. The fact remains that the teacher let go had just finished a three-week training program and had every expectation she would be part of the teaching staff. It is not easy to develop a school in which the individual counts when the bureaucracy operates so arbitrarily and so heartlessly.

*September 1, 1979.* We learn that some parents are dissuaded from sending their children to the Louis Armstrong School by the principal of the neighborhood elementary school agreeing to provide the parents with the teacher they wanted for their children. The school is already having an effect as competition for children becomes fierce. There is something to be said for schools competing for children. It puts schools on their mettle.

*September 6, 1979.* I meet with Stan Lewis of the School of Library Science and Informational Studies. We make an appointment to go to the school on Monday to talk with the media specialist. Les Schwartz, Professor of Counselor Education, comes to the school. I take him around to meet everyone. He has a talk with Jim Murray, the school guidance counselor. They discuss how the college and school can cooperate to develop a counseling program. More and more I see that part of my job is laying the groundwork for relationships to develop.

*September 10, 1979.* The first day of school. I feel an air of excitement. It feels as though we have pulled off a minor miracle. A few months ago, there was nothing but a building, and today we have a place with teachers, parents, and children. Mr. Sanfilippo is everywhere. His energy and knowledge of the system have helped the school to get going.

I see so much that needs changing. Everything is departmentalized. We need to arrange for larger blocks of time for instruction. We need to help teachers to deal more effectively with heterogeneous groups. We need to set up ways for involving teachers and college people in curriculum development. I know that changes have to be made slowly.

The buses do not pick up the children on schedule. A poor introduction. The first day is confusion. I do not understand why we accept bureaucratic bungling as normal.

A party is held in the teachers' dining room to celebrate a teacher's birthday and the first day of school. The three-week training period has brought everyone closer together.[3] It would be great if we could develop the same kind of climate for children. The atmosphere is positive.

The home economics teacher asks me to look at her bulletin board. The social studies teacher indicates he was responsible for the idea of having a school map included in material for parents and children. The math teacher talks about her excitement in making maps with the children.

People need to be recognized. At the end of the first day optimism rides high.

## *AFTER SIX MONTHS: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED*

The collaboration between Queens College and the Louis Armstrong Middle School began successfully, if success can be measured by the satisfaction of the teachers, administrators, parents, children, and professors who were part of the venture. We had succeeded in opening a school despite the admonitions of those who felt the problems represented by too little time, a tumultuous history surrounding the school, the record of failure of other school-college ventures, and the fact of participants having different sets of values would be too much to overcome. We had succeeded in creating a school that was integrated, organized in heterogeneous groups, and in which parents were involved. We had made strides in developing an atmosphere in which mutual trust existed among teachers, administrators, college personnel, and parents. In so doing, we had laid the groundwork for continued school improvement.

During the process of working together, we learned what factors contribute to the development of a successful school-college collaboration. Included among them are:

- The support of the President of the college, which brought with it psychological encouragement and easier access to campus resources (I.S. 227 staff had use of the library, the pool, computer facilities, and art education equipment).
- The involvement of key personnel in the School of Education (Dean of Teacher Education, Associate Dean of Education, Chairperson of Secondary Education), which contributed sources of power to the project.
- The commitment of those involved in the project—eight professors volunteered 100 hours over the summer to read the resumes of teacher applicants; other professors attended weekly evening meetings with parents and community representatives to prepare for the opening of the school.
- The commitment of the college as represented by its contribution of materials and services—1,500 books

were given to the school library to fill otherwise empty shelves; the Department of Secondary Education provided art supplies for the school; as Associate Dean of Education, I was assigned full time to the school.

- The attitude of the college staff, which avoided a "we the experts" approach to the school staff.
- The ability of the college faculty at the school to work in a non-threatening manner.
- The recognition of the importance of the Principal and the College Director, and the ability of both to communicate and to empathize with each other.
- The clear distinction of roles calling for the Principal to run the day-to-day affairs of the school.
- The high visibility of college staff with the Director and other professors present daily at the school—a Queens College office was set up at the school to provide a working area for faculty.
- An awareness of the complexity of implementing a design and recognition that it needs to be brought into being slowly.
- A recognition on the part of college faculty that working in the school represents an opportunity to learn.
- Assigning only those college faculty to the school who express a desire to work in the field and who have the ability to work with teachers.
- The importance of social occasions in helping to develop good relationships.
- The recognition that individual teacher change is rarely sufficient to bring about the institutional change and the need to develop a broader orientation toward school renewal.
- The establishment of a summer program for which teachers are paid and in which administration and college faculty participate, which has as a major purpose the development of relationships.

- The importance of ongoing discussion as a way of institutionalizing a process of self-examination.
- Providing recognition for all participants in the project—letters of appreciation, words of acknowledgement, being present at plays and musical presentations, using teachers as resource people in college classes, providing tuition waivers for teachers who work with student teachers, hiring school staff as adjunct lecturers.

The months before the school opened were devoted to the development and implementation of a design, to the making of relationships, and to the creation of communication channels among school, college, and community. It was a time for clarifying roles. It was a time for establishing personal and professional credentials. It was a time to look ahead and to pose such questions as:

- How can we implement change that will bring the school closer to the ideas described in the original design?
- How can we create a situation in which teachers will be more willing to accept and utilize Queens College resources?
- How can we help a school and its staff to take the risk of moving beyond what they are accustomed to doing?
- How can we use the experience of working with the Louis Armstrong Middle School to affect teacher education at the college?
- How can we continue to develop an atmosphere characterized by trust?

These and other questions will be dealt with as we proceed with our analysis of the collaboration during its first years of operation.

# NOTES

1. Our ideas regarding middle school education are described elsewhere in this chapter, and are alluded to in other parts of this book and in the interviews in the appendices.

2. The School University Teacher Education Center (SUTEC) was a jointly planned cooperative venture of the New York City Central Board of Education and Queens College which was located in P.S. 76 in Long Island and opened in 1966.

3. This was the first summer in-service program cooperatively developed and implemented by the college and the school.

CHAPTER 4

# *Dreams and Realities*

**Sidney Trubowitz**
*Queens College*

We had dreams of what a school could be. The collaboration gave us a chance to try converting these dreams into realities. We knew that to make these dreams come true, we, as a college, could no longer remain oblivious to the fundamental problems of society. We would need to work with schools to deal responsibly, honestly, vigorously, and knowledgeably on integration and other issues. We would need to recognize that research, development, evaluation, and practice are not separate and that the school could become an arena in which to test our ideas and to implement visions.

## *SOME DREAMS*

We had dreams of making integration work successfully in an urban school, of creating a place where children of different races, languages, and backgrounds would be a source of richness rather than divisiveness. We had dreams of undoing the stereotype of 10 to 14 year-olds as rebellious creatures who persist in being uninvolved with learning and are alienated from adults, and of developing a middle school that looked at children as the soul of an enterprise rather than as its enemy. We envisioned a school where maintenance of order would not be the end, where unnecessary rules would be avoided, and where children experienced unconditional positive acceptance. We wanted a school where each child would be known well by at least one adult. We saw a school that rejected segregation of students whether on the basis of race, ability or handicap. We pictured a school in which teachers would be willing to take risks. We hoped for a situation in which college personnel would be

accepted by public school staff as partners in the effort to improve education. We sought the development of cooperative relationships among school, college, and community in which everyone could identify with common purposes. We saw a school that would develop curriculum rather than be restricted by it. We dreamed of a school constantly involved in the process of improving itself. We wanted a school that recognized the arts as integral to education. We envisioned a learning environment that would accommodate the learning styles and interests of each child. We wanted a school that saw community education as not only a way of providing learning opportunities for community residents, but also as a way of utilizing the many experiences and skills of neighborhood people. We dreamed of a school that was out of the ordinary, that could combine all that was best for children.

But you cannot simply implement a dream. There are innumerable factors affecting what happens. The implementation of a dream is affected by people—their histories, their personalities, their attitudes, their abilities. It is affected by events such as judicial and legal decisions and changes in leadership or financial support. It may even be affected by luck, by the way personalities happen to mesh, or by the attitudes of influential parents whose children attend the school.

## *SOME REALITIES*

With each year our dream of what the school might be draws closer to reality. But even today, a tour of the school reveals that the dream has yet to be fully realized. It is there in bits and snatches. What has happened that allows part of the dream to occur while other elements remain missing? Again, we look to a sampling of events taken from my diary to help explain.

*September 14, 1979.* I discuss how the first week of school has gone with Bernie Alfant, the Assistant Principal. Assistant principals are to New York City schools as chief petty officers are to naval vessels. They make sure that details are in order and the organization functions. He describes a series of little disasters. The keys delivered for the school do not fit the doors. Most buses either showed up late to pick up children or did not arrive. No chalk or board erasers have been supplied. Teacher vacancies remain and some classes are being led by substitute teachers. A social studies teacher we had selected decided to take another position. There is last-minute scurrying to find someone else.

With such uncertainty prevailing it is little wonder that when I attend teacher meetings the discussions so often revolve around security needs. I recall, at a meeting just before the school opened, how the teachers'

questions had entirely to do with how to refer discipline problems, schedules, bells, and materials. They sought to ensure the security of their environment before they could move to discussion of curriculum and goals. I need to remind myself that security needs are paramount and have to be dealt with before any talk of dreams can begin.

*September 18, 1979.* I meet with the chairpeople of the Departments of Urban Studies and Political Science and suggest possibilities for involvement in the school. They express little desire to get involved. Academic departments seem far removed from the problems of public schools.

*September 19, 1979.* We have established a Language Arts Committee. It is an area in which I am interested and gives me a chance to work closely with teachers. But day-to-day school needs get in the way of staff development. A committee meeting time arrives and the teachers are pulled away to fill out bus transportation passes. Will nuts-and-bolts items always take precedence over questions of educational direction? Will matters of school mechanics constantly conflict with helping teachers to grow?

*October 9, 1979.* Some teachers express concern about the impracticality of having fifth and sixth grade children in the same group. It is a worry that illustrates their view of teaching and learning for they focus almost totally on the need to teach a Board of Education curriculum and they see their responsibility primarily for communicating prescribed subject matter. Everything around them supports this conception: 45-minute periods, departmentalized programs, children traveling from subject matter specialist to subject matter specialist. Interage grouping and team teaching have not been implemented for they cannot be done without teachers who are philosophically, psychologically, and technically prepared. We have to set the stage for organizational and curriculum change. We cannot expect to create our vision totally all at once. We find we have to retreat temporarily from our original design. We need to avoid allowing ourselves to be seduced by an attractive idea if it has not got its right time and place.

*October 24, 1979.* The problem of heterogeneous grouping is raised again by some parents. It is a question with which we will be dealing for a long time. The parents with whom we meet question whether the needs of their bright children will be met within the heterogeneous class. They want classes for the intellectually gifted. It is what they have been accustomed to in the elementary schools from which their children have come. Difficulties in maintaining heterogeneous groups increase since teachers also feel more comfortable teaching homogeneous groups. We are faced with the problem of helping teachers change behavior so that small group instruction, awareness of differences in learning style, and

the ability to differentiate instruction become more a part of the teaching act. There is a constant need to point out the values involved in not separating children based on academic ability.

*November 8, 1979.* I am walking down a hallway in the school and I see a boy bouncing a ball. My first thought is to demand that he stop. I look around me and I see not a soul in sight. Quiet surrounds everything. All I hear is the sound of the bouncing ball. Slowly and regularly it bounces. I restrain my impulse to make him stop and I walk by. He continues bouncing the ball for a moment, stops, and returns to his class.

The struggle to change, to modify traditional behavior is not easy. At a workshop with other principals on movement education, Mr. Sanfilippo is pridefully describing a lunchroom scene at the school. He tells about how children move on their own from eating to the library, outside yard, bathroom, and other areas. He emphasizes the value of movement for children. But along with the praise he points out that the typical superintendent might look askance at such activity. In giving this perception he is presenting the conflict within himself for his are the eyes of an ex-superintendent. The task is to support his statement that physical movement is good for children and to veer him away from the view that control is the single, all-important goal.

*November 15, 1979.* I watch a school security guard screaming at children. At other times I have witnessed him blasting on a whistle and then yelling for silence. I tell Anthony about it, who indicates he will try to get the guard to control the whistle-blowing and shouting. He reminds me that this treatment of children as inmates is not untypical of how schools treat adolescents. I wonder how to help change an attitude that equates getting control with screaming and whistle-blowing.

*November 19, 1979.* The Language Arts Committee meets. I learn how difficult it is to achieve a common point of view. Only after much shared, positive experience can mutuality of goals develop. The teachers on the committee differ sharply on how reading should be taught. Some believe in focusing on the teaching of grammar and stressing the basics. Others see greater value accruing from varied language experience. But the differences go beyond differences in educational point of view. Personal animus enters as teachers feel each is not given sufficient recognition. They become angry at each other. I wonder how it is possible to mesh such diverse points of view and how it is possible to develop a cohesive group when such personal antipathy exists. We struggle to find points of agreement.

*November 27, 1979.* I waver between optimism and despair. Today I feel pessimistic. I observe what seems a total emphasis on lesson plans, curriculum bulletins, grades, and tests with insufficient thought being

given to finding opportunities for experiential learning and for viewing evaluation in broader ways. Another blast of the whistle and the sight of a teacher struggling to form her class into separate, silent lines of boys and girls deepen my pessimism. I see tasks ahead as overwhelming. It becomes painfully clear that we cannot do it all, that our task is to help make things better and not necessarily the ideal.

*December 5, 1979.* Meetings with parents are constant. They continue to ask questions about individualization. These questions are useful for we have never come up with a clear definition of what we mean by individualization. The role of parents continues to be formed. They are prods to our thinking. Some serve as resources as they come to classrooms to talk about their jobs. Parents act in different ways. Some make supportive suggestions; others play the part of the adversary. Cooperative or critical parents help to keep a school involved in a process of self-examination. We need constantly to ask such questions as: How do we communicate better to parents? How do we define innovation? How do we avoid developing antagonism between parents and school?

*January 10, 1980.* We visit a middle school in Bedford, New York, an affluent suburban community. It is a way of opening windows on our minds. To learn from a visit to another school takes an ability to relax defensiveness. Since educators are frequently unsure that what they are doing is effective, many view a situation that is different as criticism. It takes a kind of security to be able to learn from others. It is not easy to keep our post-visit discussion from concentrating on what we saw that was lacking.

A meeting of college faculty working at the school is held. Two professors, who had been associated with a previous college-school venture which had failed, flood the session with their criticism—not enough black children, not enough mediocre teachers to claim we are working in a realistic situation. Another professor advocates confrontation as a way of achieving change. I want to move in my own way. I feel confirmed in my view that to help a school is to avoid taking a superior, critical stance—that we are involved in the collaboration to help and to learn. I realize how important it is to choose faculty who can be constructive and who will not be working out their own personal frustrations.

*February 6, 1980.* The Language Arts Committee has foundered. We continue to differ about how to handle children's writing. Some teachers, some parents, and the school administration push for correcting all errors in children's writing. They are caught up in the back-to-basics movement. They receive support from highly placed professionals in the bureaucracy who deride the stress on the creative as a focus on what is

lofty and impractical. I prefer the view which talks of going forward to the basics rather than back to the basics. These new basics will include the attainment of decisionmaking skills and skills in human relationships.

I wonder if the fact that we are in an economic recession contributes to educators forgetting and neglecting to plan for the full spectrum of human skills. I wonder if it makes for a stress on what is superficial and highly visible as opposed to the complex aspects of human nature. I wonder if we have become more concerned with preparing people to work for industry than to think for themselves, whether we have become more concerned with skills than with creativity, with the mechanics of reading than with the quality of reading. We are focusing on the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic to the exclusion of helping children to learn to make intelligent decisions, to become involved, and to be concerned for others. We have equated evaluation with achievement test scores.

Student teachers have been working with children in the Early Bird program which takes place each morning from 8:00 to 8:40. It has proved very successful in that many children have been arriving early to learn chess, sign language, crocheting, baton twirling, and karate. Anthony telephones to tell me that some teachers are submitting a grievance on the program. They oppose student teachers volunteering for an activity for which teachers might get paid. The grievance is settled as we agree to pay two teachers to supervise the program and some others to offer their own Early Bird activity. The question of volunteerism is a valid one but it seems to me that it is being inappropriately applied. Student teachers perform many functions that profit the school program and from which they learn. The question in my mind is what to do about a mentality that equates every working moment with money compensation. There must be a middle ground between having educational tasks done which might not otherwise be performed and not depriving teachers of paid employment. There must be a way of creating an atmosphere which allows for commitment to educational growth not measured in time.

*February 13, 1980.* The Board of Education Corporation Counsel calls the school inquiring why the school should be limited to 1,200 children rather than 1,800. We tell him that the original design specifies the lower number. There are still elements at the Board whose only concern is logistics. They give little thought to the goals of the collaboration. The press to accept larger numbers of children is likely to continue.

*April 10, 1980.* Molly Fine, the school's reading teacher, Anthony, and I make a presentation on a "School-College Partnership in Developing a Language Arts Program" at the annual meeting of the New York State Reading Association. Plans such as these help us to focus on what we

would like to achieve. We get together periodically to evaluate what has been happening. In this way the dreams of what the collaboration might accomplish are more likely to become the fact. There are other instances in which this approach proves valuable. Anthony, a parent, and I agree to make a presentation at the A.A.C.T.E. conference in Detroit on the topic "School-College-Community Cooperation." Betsy Kaufman, the professor who has been overseeing the Early Bird program, and I agree to write an article describing what has happened. By deciding to present before professional audiences, we commit ourselves to fulfilling our ideas of what the school-college project will achieve.

*April 16, 1980.* We attend the New York State Reading Association Conference to give our presentation. While we are there we hear Dr. Lee Salk give a talk about parenting in which he stresses the importance of parents and children sharing meal time with each other. When we return to school, Anthony sends a letter home inviting parents to join their children for lunch at school. Anthony shows an openness to innovative ideas. After our visit to the Collegiate School, he introduced the same kind of salad bar in our dining room he had seen operating there. Principals of big city schools seem rarely to be able to attend professional conferences or to visit other schools. By arranging for Anthony to join us at professional conferences and for school visits, we have helped a little to break down the parochialism of the large urban school.

*April 24, 1980.* Carol Bellamy, President of the New York City Council, visits the school and asks, "What have you done which can be of value to other schools?" We are faced with the question of replicability. The fact is that everything which is part of the school-college collaboration cannot be transported intact to other schools. But there are aspects of the partnership which are borrowable and of potential use elsewhere. The idea of school-college collaboration, the Early Bird program, the mentorship activity, and other programs which have been introduced are all capable of duplication in other schools.[3]

The question highlights again the need for documenting what has been occurring. We want data on attendance and achievement but we want more. We want anecdotal information, art work, photographs, slides, and videotapes—all of which might give a more complete picture of where the school started and where it has come. We find difficulty in having our traditional researchers at the college move beyond the accumulation of statistics. They seem obsessed with tables and numbers. Researchers of this sort remind me of the businessman on the fourth planet of *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry who counts the stars and who is "concerned with matters of consequence," who has "no time for idle dreaming."[4] He counts the stars and recounts them. Then he

writes the number of his stars on a little paper and puts this paper in a drawer and locks it with a key. The little prince leaves puzzled, for it seems to him that what the businessman is doing is of little use to the stars.

*May 6, 1980.* I meet with members of the Teachers Advisory group to discuss ways in which the Queens College Center could be more effective. They ask if professors of adolescent psychology could join with the teachers to help identify characteristics of 10 to 14 year-olds, and to discuss ways in which the school could best work with these qualities. We arrange for four of our professors to meet with the school staff.

I hold meetings with this representative group of teachers on a regular basis. Even though there may not always be issues of great moment to discuss, these meetings provide another channel of communication. Together with our meetings with the parents and with representatives of the Board of Education, this ensures periodic contact with each other. We operate with the idea that more communication channels are better than fewer communication channels.

The custodian informs us that the college counselors can no longer see clients at the school after 5:00 p.m. There are no funds available to keep the school building open after that time. Our dreams of having the school become a center for working with parents and the community are diminished by a lack of resources which keeps schools closed rather than open. We switch the counseling sessions with parents to the college site.

## *SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS*

The dreams of what the school-college collaboration might achieve remain incomplete. Yet, there have been accomplishments. The college has learned more about the problems of schools and the idea that the college is isolated from the real problems of schools has been dissipated. There are professors who have felt a greater sense of contribution than they have ever experienced before from their involvement in the schools. The teacher education program has been vitalized by the fact that some college classes are conducted at the school, providing the prospective teachers with ready access to middle school students. Some professors have developed an expanded view of what research is and how it can be done.

The collaboration has resulted in the development of programs for the school. These include the Early Bird program, a Marriage and Family Counseling service, peer tutoring, a mentorship program, after school remedial reading, Saturday classes at the college, an internship program, and programs in adult education.[5] A cooperative effort between Board of

Education personnel and college faculty resulted in the college receiving a Federal grant to promote integration at the school. The grant supported the establishment of a community room and a community education program. A museum has been established at the school to display the work of children and local artists.

School, college, and community no longer work in isolation. Ongoing dialogue occurs. Resources are exchanged as professors work in the school and as teachers become part of the college staff. A School Climate Committee composed of teachers, parents, school administrators, and college staff has been established to explore ways in which the positive tone that presently exists can be improved even more. The committee has already initiated a big brother/big sister program utilizing college students, and has begun a series of meetings to obtain student reaction to their school experience. Professors have been integrated into the school's social system. Like teachers, they are part of the school's ambiance. They are in classes working with teachers and children. They join classes on trips and have dinner at teachers' homes.

There is a general satisfaction about the school expressed by school administrators, teachers, parents, children, and professors. As one professor put it, "My relationship with the social studies teachers makes life better for me and, I believe, for them. I think this kind of collaboration improves the quality of life for all." Motivation to continue the collaboration remains high.

A process for self-examination exists. Along with regular meetings among all the concerned groups, questions regarding established patterns are exchanged almost daily. Periodic reviews to bring in new ideas from the staff and to anticipate changes in the environment have become part of the collaborative operation. One recent result of staff input has been the development of an extended homeroom period allowing children greater opportunity to discuss values and obtain counsel from teachers. This process of self-examination has been abetted by bringing in outside consultants who add their own fresh perceptions to the school. Relationships have evolved to the point where each group allows itself to be influenced by others.

There has also been an exchange of facilities. Public school students have used the college pool and theater. They have made overnight trips to the college's Environmental Center at Caumsett, Long Island. They have visited the college laboratories, library, and television studio. The college, in turn, has used the public school facility for continuing education classes, undergraduate classes, and conferences.

Despite the fact that there have been good student achievement results and high attendance rates for both pupils and teachers, that a process for

coping with problems has been established, that the stakeholders in the collaboration feel good about the school, and that some elements of the design have been developed, much remains to be done.

## *SOME GOALS YET UNREALIZED*

The school organization has only begun to break away from the traditional pattern. As it exists, it encourages an emphasis on grades, tests, and simple mastery of factual knowledge. The departmentalized arrangement inhibits interdisciplinary instruction, experiential learning, or the taking of trips. The fact that children see seven or eight teachers during a day does not allow for in-depth contact between teachers and students.[6] Teachers continue to need to grow in their ability to differentiate instruction so as to provide for variations in learning styles, interests, and abilities. They still rely largely on curriculum bulletins and have yet to develop enough security to take the risk of embarking on new curriculum paths. The right to fail has not been established; absolute success continues to have priority. Although teachers do participate in decisionmaking, their input is obtained in a scattered, haphazard fashion.[7] There is a need to institutionalize processes that will allow teacher involvement to be more widespread and to occur with greater regularity. A special education program that provides an integrated education is but in its infancy. The central bureaucracy remains only partially committed to the collaboration, as evidenced by the fact that it has perceived the school primarily as a way of dealing with problems of logistics rather than education. Control continues as a major goal rather than as a means to an ordered environment facilitating learning. Not enough has been done to modify settings so that the need for control becomes less paramount. For example, the lunchroom still needs to become a place for human interaction rather than a battle for order.

Although strides have been made, the college reward system promotes, for the most part, only those who have given their time and energy to publications and still fails to encourage professional activity in the field.

As we look ahead, it is clear that the collaboration faces many tasks. If we look back we can also see that much has been learned in the process of school and college working together.

## *WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED*

We realize more clearly than ever that you cannot rush growth. We entered the collaboration with our grand design and found that teachers needed time to be prepared and to prepare themselves before modifying

traditional modes of behavior. We developed the ability to retreat as we moved more cautiously toward the implementation of our vision.

We learned that there are other ways to approach curriculum change than through direct intervention in the classroom. We set up a "shadow curriculum" by establishing Saturday classes in art, music and computers that were led by particularly imaginative teachers.[8] Programs of instruction in instruments and chorus were set up before and after school. The Early Bird program gave children a chance to match their interests with those of their teachers and to have less formal teaching that was based on experience. In itself, this oblique approach was not enough to effect curriculum change, but it did develop the atmosphere for innovation.

We found that there was a need to emphasize the successes achieved by the collaboration. Frequently, I would find myself faced by professors bemoaning their inability to work with teachers or the administration. I was told time after time that the collaboration was doomed to failure, that: "Teachers have been drained of all professionalism by years in the system;" and "You can't overcome bureaucratic instincts that lean toward rigidity and a compulsive need for order." I point out our successes and ask the temporary pessimist to reflect on how different things would be if there were no collaboration. I point to the teacher who is trying a new approach in social studies, to a parent who feels her life has taken a different turn because of her involvement in the school, and to the positive reactions of visitors. I work to help people focus on what is there, not on what is missing.

We came to the school with the idea that we would develop a model that could be replicated in most middle schools. We have replaced the concept of replicability with the idea of borrowability. We have tempered our original view with reality, for no two situations are alike and there are only portions of the collaborative effort that are transportable. College-school partnerships can occur everywhere, but the rate and the content of what happens depend on a multitude of factors.

We have come to realize that a school's clients are not only its students. For a collaboration to be fully effective, others involved in the effort need to feel gratification. Schools become dismal, sterile places when teachers and administrators receive little recognition for what they do. It was important that the collaboration provide a place that allowed professors, parents, school staff as well as children to feel that they are achieving. The success of the collaboration can also be measured in the comments of a professor, two years from retirement, who said, "The school has given me a new lease on life." It is also there in the words of the principal who remarked, "These have been the most exciting years of my professional life." It is there in the reactions of other professors, parents, and teachers who like being at the school and speak of it as *their* school.

We have discovered the value of having people shift roles. When a principal becomes a professor, when a professor becomes a public school teacher, when a parent becomes a teacher, and when teachers are parents, there develops a greater understanding of each other's role and dialogue becomes easier.

We have seen the need to deal with contradictions and to try to eliminate them. The school's design called for individualization of instruction. In practice teachers give uniform tests and letter grades that take little account of the variability among students. We foresaw a community school that would operate from early in the morning till late at night. No funds were provided to keep the school open after 5:00 p.m. The school was mandated to be integrated. Many of the special education classes are made up primarily of minority group youngsters.

We observed in the beginning how apparent was the halo effect. We found ways of maintaining the glow of specialness surrounding the school. Our efforts at documentation included the taking of many photographs and the shooting of many videotapes. Teachers felt that what they were doing was special, since a photographer or a videotape technician would frequently come to their room to record what was happening. A steady stream of visitors from throughout the nation and other countries added to the sense that the school was involved in something unique. The many newspaper articles reporting on the school also gave recognition to what was happening.

We learned that gains once achieved could not be taken for granted. There is a need to return to solidify achievement. For example, the Early Bird program, which was initiated with such great success, in time became less well-attended. We found it necessary to work on strengthening it.

We began to develop a clearer view of what is meant by collaboration. We saw that it included ongoing dialogue, the development of trusting relationships, and cooperative decisionmaking. We noted how it involved an exchange of resources, people, and facilities. As Director of the Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades, my role and the part I needed to play in the collaboration became clearer.

# NOTES

1. As I review this item more than three years later, I am struck with how differently the security guard now behaves. The whistle has disappeared, and yelling is minimal. I wonder at what has caused the change. I am sure it is not any one thing, but rather a combination of factors including absorbing the respectful attitude toward students given by both professors and teachers, developing positive relationships with children, and appreciating the stability and beauty the school has brought to the community. For example, he talks with pride to visitor after visitor about the mural of Louis Armstrong which graces the front of the building. He has also taken up woodcarving, an activity which he has observed in the nearby industrial arts classroom. He has become more part of the life of the school.

2. For a more detailed discussion of the Early Bird program, see Chapter 6.

3. A mentorship program provided for an adult-child relationship based on a mutuality of interest. The adults involved included teachers, student teachers, other college students, parents, and community members.

4. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, Harcourt, Brace, and World, New York, 1943, p. 45.

5. In the internship program, the college recruited graduate students with undergraduate degrees in education who served three days a week at the school in various capacities in return for free tuition and a small stipend.

6. Since this manuscript was written much progress has been made toward establishing core instruction and providing block scheduling, making for more in-depth contact with fewer teachers.

7. Recently the school succeeded in getting the Board of Education to provide periodic days for staff development with students dismissed early to allow for conference time. This has made for much greater teacher participation in policy-making.

8. These Saturday classes were initially subsidized by the college and were set up to provide models of instruction for I.S. 227. So great has been the community demand that the program now takes in sufficient funds to give scholarships to Louis Armstrong pupils and others.

CHAPTER 5

# *The College Director: The Man in the Middle*

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As leader of the college effort, I am the man in the middle. I am surrounded by people with different values, different ways of working, different personalities, different goals, and different perceptions of my role. A leader of any group is faced with conflict and resistance. But as the person trying to coordinate resources and activities between two institutions, I had a more complex role than a school principal, a department chairperson, or an administrator, since I needed to deal with individuals whose feelings, ideas, personalities, values, and even languages were shaped by two quite different environments. I was subject to pressures from both environments. My position as the man in the middle is illustrated by how even my physical boundaries shifted. As a professor I spent time at the college. As Director of the Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades which was collaborating with the school, I worked closely with the principal and the staff in the school building. As liaison between the college and the school I occupied a boundary between the two institutions.

A comparison of the backgrounds of college professors and public school teachers points to the inevitability of conflict. Many professors of education have taught in public schools. Although a desire to teach at a college probably influenced them to go on for further education, another motivating factor may well have been the wish to escape the frustrations, the dissatisfactions, and the bureaucratic inanities of urban school systems (such as time clocks, rigid lesson plans, plan books, etc.). Previous

experience may have made them impatient with public schools. This discontent frequently translates into a desire either to withdraw totally from contact with public schools, or, when they become involved, to plunge in seeking large changes in a short period of time. They are joined in this attitude by those professors who come from a private school experience where they are more likely to have been treated as professionals. They look askance at the less-than-respectful environments in which public school teachers work and see the need for immediate change. As Director I was faced with the task of keeping ambitions within attainable and reasonable parameters and yet allowing professors to feel a sense of achievement. For example, I pointed out to college faculty that to immediately expect teachers to move away from exclusive use of a textbook and focus learning around children's interests was to be unrealistic. But it *was* an accomplishment when social studies teachers introduced such novels as *Johnny Tremain* as a way of studying the American revolution. Although large goals could be formulated to represent an ultimate destination, the emphasis needed to be placed on small changes. To rush growth was to make for stunted, rootless trees. It was to push form rather than substance. Not all elements of the original design could be immediately implemented. For example, it soon became apparent that teachers were not prepared to implement interage grouping since many relied on lecturing the whole class as the way to teach and were not skilled at differentiating instruction. We saw the necessity for setting this long-range goal aside and placing the accent on more immediate concrete problems. By keeping goals modest and by working around the traditional core, there was greater likelihood of success and less resistance to change.

Professors who come from research backgrounds present another kind of problem. Frequently, research for them has been dealing with manageable slices of school life. Their scholarly explorations have failed to do justice to complicated educational problems. The lack of impact on the classroom has bred resentment and suspicion on the part of teachers and encouraged the stereotype of the cerebral but useless academician. With this the case, another aspect of my role was to delay implementing research having possible long-range benefits and to focus on what might be immediately helpful. When the college provided art supplies and library books, it was of incalculably more value than would have been the immediate administration of tests to obtain data for research.

People with the need for autonomy and for time to pursue their own scholarly interests are more likely to choose college teaching over public school teaching. At the university level there are fewer constraints of time and authoritarian mandates. Professors are freer to theorize, to explore

goals having to do with human development and appreciation, and to actualize their own points of view. The pressures surrounding public school teachers are quite different and dictate a focus on survival. The publication of reading scores, the stress on accountability, and the general criticism have created a sense of uneasiness in public school staff. Survival is primary and has come to mean demonstrated improvement of basic skills.

The project brought together people from two different backgrounds: professors concerned with such goals as the appreciation of literature, improvement of human relations skills, and growth in decisionmaking ability and school faculty more concerned with behavioral objectives and growth in the basic skills. As Director I was faced with the job of meshing the two sets of goals. I needed to show that it was possible to introduce what was more lofty and general and at the same time to achieve what was short range and concrete. My task in convincing teachers and professors that the two sets of goals were not contradictory became less difficult each year as children's achievement scores reached higher levels while, at the same time, art, music, and creative writing continued as integral parts of the curriculum. At meetings and in informal conversations I pointed out how the opportunity for creative expression supported the development of skills.

I was frequently in the position of explaining one bureaucratic way of life to members of the other bureaucracy. Some professors, for example, could not fathom the idea that the college and school could not have free rein in their selection of teachers. The concepts of transfer rights, seniority, and licensing were difficult to absorb or accept. My attempts to explain Board of Education regulations met with varying degrees of success. At the same time, I needed to explain to the public school administration that college professors did not work by the clock, that they were not obliged to be at any one particular location for any set number of hours, and that professorial accountability was assessed on a long-range basis rather than in a day-to-day manner.

As the leader of the college project I became the target for varying expressions of dependency on the part of the faculty. When a professor encountered frustration in his attempts to work with the teachers and the principal, I would be urged to assert college authority. The explicit message was for me to insist as project partner that our way was the correct one. It was expected that I would arrange matters so that professors could do as they saw fit, that I would be the key to total gratification. I needed to resist the temptation to plunge into impulsive action. My role became one of clarifying expectations, of indicating that we could not dictate exact ways of working, that total gratification was

not possible, and that to achieve change called for influence through the use of skill, expertise, and knowledge. An important aspect of my role was to listen to frustrations and to put them into proper perspective. It was important for me to take these frustrations and to relabel them as problems to be expected. I needed to indicate constantly the progress that was being made no matter how small the forward movement. I had to remind professors that resistance to change is an inevitable part of the process of change and part of the nature of schools as bureaucracies.

The college and public school often operate in totally different ways when it comes to making decisions. There have been times on the university level when topics have been discussed at meeting after meeting without a decision being reached. I can recall one instance of a college department taking over two years to come to a decision regarding its change of name. On the other hand, instances abound in public schools of decisions affecting everyone being made arbitrarily and precipitously. For example, decisions regarding testing, homework, and behavior are frequently unilateral decisions around which little or no discussion has taken place. College professors, although they may express some discomfort regarding lengthy group processes, expect that they will be involved in the decisionmaking. Public school teachers, on the contrary, may complain about the arbitrariness of administrators' decisions but expect and even welcome the fact that they are not asked to expend time and energy on lengthy group meetings.

Our goal became one of finding a middle ground. We sought to increase staff involvement and yet to maintain effective utilization of time. We found that even though professors had more time for discussion, it was not always necessary to involve the entire education faculty in all project matters. Such meetings of the faculty were not only fruitless but could be damaging. Feelings of jealousy, aggression toward leadership, and the negative residue remaining from previous Board of Education-college ventures sometimes led to meetings filled with anger and hostility. We moved away from the false democratic ethic that everyone had to discuss everything. Rather, we recognized the scarcity of time and met with only those who might be directly affected by the decisions to be made.

As the man in the middle, I became the focal point for complaints. I would hear negative statements from professors about the school administration. Criticism would flow in other directions as well, from professor about professor, from teacher about professor, from professor about teacher. I would hear, for example, that a professor had given a student teacher hardly any supervision or that some teachers adamantly resisted suggestions. I sensed that underlying each complaint was the wish that I

would make things right. The wrong-finders found the principal a particularly easy target; it was not that they were always incorrect in their assessment, but that they lacked any feeling about the complexity and difficulty of the administrator's job. I tried to see the issues from the different vantage points and to help professors and practitioners to understand each other. To do this successfully, I needed to establish myself as a member of the different groups. In addition to my linkage with the college, I had to work toward integrating myself into the school social system and to develop clear lines of communication with parents.

In February 1981, I took a sabbatical for one semester. I left feeling quite comfortable about things since the school-college collaboration seemed well under way and Clarence Bunch, who had been part of things from the start, had agreed to assume my role as Director. I wanted an opportunity to gain perspective on what had been occurring, to visit other middle schools, to present some of what we had learned at conferences, and to write.

## *DEALING WITH CHANGES*

When I returned full-time months later, I was struck by the number of changes. Some changes had been expected. We were aware, for example, that the school population was to reach its maximum of 1,200 children and that about 30 new teachers would have to be hired over the summer. Other changes had been hinted at. We knew Anthony Sanfilippo wanted very much to return to his former job in District 24 and had been actively campaigning to regain the superintendency. It was, therefore, not a total surprise to find out that he had gotten his wish.

But there were other changes, completely unpredictable changes over which I had no control. William Fibkins, our ESAA project director and an essential part of our leadership team, suddenly decided to move to another position.[1] Compounding the difficulty for the prospects of the community education program was a drastic cut in Federal funds supporting the project. Also, the college staff working at the school was not to be the same. Edith Grossman, who had been our college liaison to the special education teachers and parents, decided to leave I.S. 227 since she wanted to get promoted and saw no possibility of that occurring working in the field. In addition, Lester Schwartz, professor of counselor education, was needed for college courses and was not reassigned.

Changes also occurred in our parent group. Spencer McLaughlin, who was employed by the Human Rights Commission, and Linda Roots, a lawyer, had been elected the two new co-presidents of the Parents' Association.

The changes in key personnel had been enormous—a new principal, community director, college faculty, and parent leadership. As I pondered the prospect of working with so many new people, part of me asked, "Why couldn't things have just stayed the same?" But nothing stays the same.

The change that caused me the most concern had to do with who was to be the new principal. No one person could be more crucial to the progress of the collaboration. No one person could be as large a hindrance or as great an aid. Although I was glad for Anthony's promotion, I also felt a burden fall on my shoulders. I remembered all the hours we had spent together at conferences, visiting other schools, sharing ideas, exchanging concerns, and simply getting to know each other, and I realized that I would have to start all over with someone else.

Questions about what was to happen flooded my mind: What was to be the process in choosing the new head of the school? Who would be involved from the parents, the college, and the Board of Education? How long would the selection process take? What kinds of candidates would be applying? How well would we all work together? I knew that whatever happened would affect the college's relationship with parents, with teachers, and, most of all, with Bernard Alfant, who would be moving from the assistant principal's position to that of acting principal. As it turned out, he filled the role of principal for seven months.

The process began over the summer with some of us from the college meeting to establish criteria for the position. A parent group met to develop its own list. One evening in July, Clarence Bunch and I came together with the parents in the Langston Hughes Library in Corona, Queens, to share our ideas. The parent representatives were bright, enthusiastic people who were jealous of their prerogatives. Having been patronized and ignored in the past, they were sensitive to anything that hinted of their being relegated to an inferior position. The ongoing difference between us about heterogeneous grouping surfaced again as they asked that the new principal be someone familiar with programs for the gifted. This suggestion stemmed from the feelings of some parents that gifted children need special class groupings. But this did not cause any big problem and we arrived at a list with which we all could agree.

We began the hours of reading resumes. The time passed with but one moment of concern. To gain a broader view of the candidates I had asked two other professors to join Clarence and me in reading resumes. Soon after a parent telephoned me, protesting what she interpreted as a violation of our agreement as to who was to look at papers. I did not feel that any such agreement had been decided on and had viewed the involvement of professors from other departments as a way of getting

more representative input. It became clear that until relationships were firmly established, procedures needed to be stated in an exact way. In talks with Spencer McLaughlin, I again realized how previous experience had made parents wary of professionals who might be prone to monopolize discussions, to speak in professional jargon, and to repress leadership activity emanating from lay people. I knew we had to deal with a history of parents having been treated with so little respect for so long that it had become easy for them to see malevolence in almost every action of all official representatives. I had seen at other times how much wisdom resides in the minds of parents, and it made me aware of the importance and value of developing a cooperative rather than an adversarial relationship.

The process of choosing a principal continued. From the over 100 resumes submitted we selected 16 to be interviewed. After three sessions of interviewing by the parent leadership, six other parents, Clarence and myself, we narrowed the choices down to seven. Then a group of us visited the schools of each of the remaining candidates. After over 75 hours of reading resumes, conducting interviews, and going to school sites, we forwarded four names, one of which was Bernard Alfant's, to the final screening board, made up of John Lidstone and two high-level officials of the Board of Education. Our task was finished and yet I was left with worrisome questions. How could we have any sense of certainty that we had chosen well? Was it too much to expect that in one person we could find the intelligence, strength, consistency, toughness, stature, and vision needed for the job?

The principal selection process hit a snag. The four candidates arrived at the Board for their final interviews and discovered that an additional person selected by the Chancellor had been injected into the race. Not only were the four candidates deflated by the move, but all of us on the advisory group saw every indication that our suggestions were being treated offhandedly.

Finally, toward the end of January, fully six months after we had begun what in retrospect seemed an interminable process, Al Herman, principal of an elementary school in Brooklyn, the Chancellor's choice, was selected. The advisory group's immediate reaction was that our many hours of work had been wasted. The parents were incensed. My sense of frustration was tempered somewhat by the many good reports I had begun to receive about our new principal. I only wished that I had received them earlier. But despite what seemed a futile expenditure of time, there were gains coming from the experience. Parents and college professors had spent hours together sharing moments of concentration, agreement, disagreement, anticipation, hope, and now sharing in the hurt

and dismay of having our recommendations ignored. We were no longer strangers to each other.

The principal selection process had other results. It reinforced parent suspicions regarding how bureaucratic organizations operate. It allowed me to get to know the parent leadership better. It gave us a new principal with direct access to the Chancellor's office. It left us with an assistant principal who had served as acting principal for seven months and now felt unappreciated and hurt. His feelings became part of the reality with which I needed to deal. One day for over an hour Bernie Alfant and I talked. He said, "You, I, and Anthony were here in the rubble. We built the school." It is true that he had been here from the beginning and given his all. For the last seven months he had worked conscientiously and effectively to keep the school moving, and now he was to go back to his previous role. It was not an easy experience to integrate.

The immediate fact was that we had a new principal and we needed to get to know him and give him the opportunity to know us. I telephoned to congratulate him on his selection and to invite him to dinner with John Lidstone, Clarence, and myself.

The process of learning about each other continues. As I write this it is but three months since Al Herman has become principal. In addition to our daily tasks and many meetings, we have attended a conference together and are planning a presentation at another, we have spent a day and a night at a conference retreat, cooperated on an article, and we meet once a week for dinner before Al teaches a class at the college.

In the third year of its existence, enrollment at the Louis Armstrong Middle School was increasing as at most urban schools. We were wary of this growth, concerned that the increase in numbers would cause logistics to rule the way, that such problems as moving pupils in and out of the lunchroom would be the priority around which everything else would revolve. We were fearful that teachers would become isolated and retreat into the security of rigid lesson plans and authoritarian control. We were bothered by the possibility that individual children would be lost among the masses and that a wholesome school climate would be upset as space, both psychological and physical, diminished.

Some provision had already been made through the Mentor program and the Early Bird activity to give youngsters a sense that some adults in the school knew them as more than a name identified with a face.[2] We expanded Early Bird and after school opportunities by obtaining graduate student interns. Two physical education interns started a roller hockey team; another joined with a regular physical education teacher to begin a ski club; two art education interns formed a student docent squad to serve as guides for our museum.

Another way we sought to avoid the loneliness that is the plight of many adolescent students was to initiate an Adult Friend Program. We began in a modest way, under the leadership of Lester Schwartz, by obtaining volunteers from the college classes that were being taught at the school, and linking them with youngsters identified by the guidance counselors as most in need of adult attention. We plan to expand the program by using senior citizens, student teachers, office and lunchroom staff, college faculty, and any other adult interested in being a friend to a young adolescent.

We also brought into the school a college faculty member whose specific function was to deal with the area of school climate. LeRoy Watkins was black, six-feet seven inches tall, an ex-basketball player, and very familiar with the school and neighborhood. None of these qualities was absolutely essential but they eased the way for LeRoy. His role was shaped by the fact that the school had a large influx of emotionally handicapped students. He became their reality counselor, guide, mentor, and ombudsman. He helped to lessen their sense of isolation in what must have seemed a strange, new environment.

We wanted to let students feel that they had some control over what happened in school. Lester and LeRoy began meeting with different groups to obtain their views on how to make the school a better place.

Another step taken to develop a more personalized environment was the two-week orientation program offered to new students and their parents each summer. This provided an informal opportunity for new entrants to become familiar with the neighborhood, the teachers, and the building.

We wanted a school where there was much interaction between students and teachers. We wanted teachers to be aware of students' needs, interests, talents, and problems. We knew that this called for an organization that avoided teachers having to meet many children during the course of a single day. We began to move toward team teaching and core instruction so that teachers would be responsible for fewer children.

Many things remain to be done before we can state with confidence that we have overcome the tendency of large institutions to produce alienation and a sense of powerlessness in their inhabitants. But we are aware of the problem and continue to focus on ways to develop an environment in which children are recognized as individuals.

As the size of the school staff grew, it became much more difficult for teachers to feel part of a whole, for them to have a sense of being connected to some group, movement, or common enterprise. To give teachers a feeling of belonging they needed an opportunity to be heard. Al Herman and I began to meet with groups of teachers to get their views

on how things could be improved. It was not sufficient just to provide a cathartic outlet, they wanted to know that their ideas could influence policymaking. At the last review teachers made specific suggestions as to how staff conferences might better be organized. These ideas have been implemented by the school administration. A series of workshops for student teachers, led by school staff, has also been initiated as a result of meetings with teachers. Teachers need to have their sense of worth periodically affirmed. I am always amazed at how appreciative they are for letters I have written to them acknowledging some achievement. Another factor contributing to the quality of life were the frequent social activities. Morning coffee hours, using almost every holiday as an excuse for a party, a faculty canoe trip, and teacher volleyball games provided opportunities for informal contact. The time during the summer in which teachers worked together on curriculum allowed them to interact in enjoyable and productive ways. A school nurtures human dignity when it helps teachers to express their own interests, values, beliefs, dispositions, and personalities.

The changes in college personnel again raised issues regarding what was to be rewarded and what priority was to be given to working in schools. Our ongoing task was to convince others of the importance of linking the college to the public schools. Even though our effort had the support of the President and the Dean of Education, it was difficult to break away from habit. Tradition held forth as the college personnel and budget committee made its recommendations for promotion and tenure with publications remaining as the single most important criterion. Most chairpeople believe that the function of their departments begins and ends in the classroom, with no thought given to the larger community. But we needed appropriate replacements for Edith Grossman and Lester Schwartz. With John Lidstone's support, the collaboration got Lester back and the promise of a replacement to work in special education for the spring semester.

Another personnel change that needed attending was locating a replacement for Bill Fibkins. Fortunately, our network of contacts found Monroe Cohen, who had worked at the college some years back. He was able to move immediately into the position and begin planning and implementing the summer student orientation program. Other project problems persisted. As a result of the funding cut, a community resource aide and an administrative assistant were to have their salaries lowered 40 percent. The money loss hurt. But it was also a blow to their sense of value since it communicated that a 40 percent loss in their activity would not harm the project. It also emphasized the ephemeral quality of their employment. We set about seeking other sources of funding.

In addition to personnel changes, other things affect a collaboration. One such occurrence is a loss of forward energy. New ventures are characterized by bursts of enthusiasm and excitement. When we started working with the Louis Armstrong Middle School, we were stimulated by the prospect of building a school from nothing, by the opportunity to reach out into the real world to work with parents and school personnel to create a very special place. Inevitably, the initial drive diminishes. It is difficult to predict when these moments of stagnation will occur. What is needed is a sensitivity to when inertia is setting in, an acceptance of the fact that such periods will happen, and a belief that it is possible to continue to move forward, to ride out moments of pessimism, and to find ways of reinvigorating the enterprise.

One way of stimulating people is to hold meetings away from the school. College faculty and school staff spent a day at a nearby conference retreat discussing plans for next year's school organization and getting to know Al Herman better. The hours of interaction in a pleasant, informal setting far from the interruptions and pressures of institutional life helped us to return to school with renewed vigor.

New people can also bring energy to an established situation. Al Herman brought with him fresh perceptions and the benefit of having been the principal of an elementary school where there was greater emphasis on experientially based learning and on the whole child. Lee Ann Truesdell, a professor of Special Education with much experience working with and for the Board of Education, joined us to add new life to the Special Education program.

Special events also can restore levels of involvement. The Louis Armstrong School and Community Arts Museum opened formally with an exhibition entitled "Realms of the Sea." Language arts, social studies, and science teachers labored long to plan, develop, and display the results of their students' exploration. They enjoyed seeing the excitement of those who viewed what they had done.

Another approach to motivating people is to call on them to be resources in college classes and to make presentations at conferences. Teachers who are asked to share their knowledge and expertise in this way feel rewarded and stimulated by such recognition.

The Queens College Center found another source of fresh energy when it began to work with a new school. P.S. 71 is in District 24, where Anthony Sanfilippo is superintendent. We have once again added college faculty to work in the new setting and there is an excitement in beginning anew.

The perception of the Louis Armstrong Middle School as a good place for children persists. At a recent open house for prospective parents the

school auditorium, which seats over 800 people, was packed with a standing-room-only audience. The school has a list of over a thousand children waiting for admission. Applications increase each year as word of the school's achievements spreads. The school continues an active recruitment campaign throughout the year to make certain that parents and children are aware of their options to attend. Unfortunately, many children are not eligible for admission because of integration regulations. The need to maintain the 55 percent minority to 45 percent white ratio and the strictures against upsetting the integration balance of other schools still exist. The college's presence is well-integrated into the school, with professors considered a natural part of the environment. Problems appear, but a process exists to deal with them. The school-college venture at I.S. 227 continues to progress.

At Queens College, we look forward to working with more public schools. We anticipate a time when other colleges will begin collaborating with schools so that education can be a process involving all institutions of learning in a seamless web beginning at the earliest age and moving through to college and beyond.

## NOTES

1. See Chapter 6.

2. Mentors were teachers, senior citizens, and community residents who selected children with whom to work in small groups or alone on topics of mutual interest. Mentorship activities included a dance group, a study of electronics, and creative writing.

## CHAPTER 6

# *All Eyes On the School*

**William Fibkins**

I.S. 227 is located on Junction and Northern Boulevards in East Elmhurst. It is a twenty-minute subway ride from Manhattan (on a good day) and a half-mile from LaGuardia Airport and Shea Stadium. It is located on the "Mason-Dixon" line in East Elmhurst. On one side is a black community that has had roots in the area for many years. On the other side is a predominantly white, middle-class neighborhood. Louis Armstrong lived here (I.S. 227 being named in his honor). Queens College, the co-sponsoring institution in the I.S. 227 agreement, is located ten miles away in Flushing.

## *VISITING I.S. 227 FOR THE FIRST TIME*

As I drove in from my Long Island suburban home in Bayport and approached the bridge in Flushing leading into East Elmhurst, I was struck by all the activity around the school area. Planes were taking off and landing at LaGuardia. A baseball game was being played at Shea Stadium. Yet as Northern Boulevard left Flushing and worked its way into Corona-East Elmhurst, I found myself becoming upset by the condition of the neighborhoods. There were few public buildings except for a Manpower Development Center and the Langston Hughes Library. There were lots of churches and a run-down business section. The area between Shea and Junction Boulevard was the black area and it appears that some policymaker had decided to forget about it. The streets were

dirty and in poor repair—not a thriving area. And there was the school: four stories of concrete and paved play areas with a huge fence. It was a large building squeezed into a corner across from a bar and a park named after a veteran of World War II. The neighborhood on the west side of Junction seemed to be Latin, Asian, and middle-class white. Farther west was another elementary school and a number of apartment buildings. South was a large Colombian area and the subway. North was LaGuardia, more small homes, and Elmcor, a community adult learning and recreation center.

As I parked my car I felt uneasy. This was a new place, a new neighborhood. How would I fare? Most of my experience had been in the suburbs at teacher and counseling centers. This was a different ballgame. As I walked into the school my first impression was that it was clean—no papers, no graffiti. It was April 1980, the first year of the school. At the office I asked for Dr. Trubowitz, the Queens College Director of the project at I.S. 227. Dr. Trubowitz discussed what had been accomplished at I.S. 227 so far and the work required to get the school moving. The school had been opened the previous September and all the hiring, supplies, and curricula were being done as the school moved along. There were only 400 students now, but the school would have 800 in September 1980 and 1,200 in September 1981.

Dr. Trubowitz reported that there had been some community resistance to opening the school on a voluntary desegregation basis to all students in Queens.[1] Some of the local community members, both black and white, had wanted the school for their children. However, the court order under which the school opened pretty much prevented many of the local black children from enrolling. There were hard feelings and I hoped that I could mediate some of the conflict and introduce adult and student programs for community members. Dr. Trubowitz said that he was impressed with my work in teacher training and desegregation programs and that he would set up a meeting with the Dean of the School of Education, John Lidstone, and Saul Cohen, President of the college. On a tour of the school, I was struck again by the cleanliness of the building. The principal, Anthony Sanfilippo, greeted me on my way out. My first impression was that he was an energetic, fast-moving person—a doer. Walking outside I wondered where was "the community"—if kids were coming from all over Queens, how would we get their parents to participate? How about the local community? How did it feel about having a new, shiny school in an area that was clearly hurting for service, and not even being able to send their children there to use the building? How receptive would these people be to a white man from the suburbs?

## *MEETING THE PRESIDENT*

Queens College is a day college, part of the City University system. The college, particularly the School of Education, had suffered a large number of cuts in the 1970's. Saul Cohen, who had assumed the Presidency only two years before, was making a real impact in revising the spirit of the college, and he seemed to have a special interest in public education. Meeting Cohen was an experience. A bright person, quick to arrive at the point, he made no bones about his commitment to I.S. 227 and the need to make it very different from the "same" old school. He wanted community involvement in the school and student and teacher participation in community action. He wanted special programs for immigrants and he was behind an expanded adult education program. He wanted student teachers involved with pupils and School of Education faculty exploring new approaches at the school. He saw I.S. 227 as an opportunity to demonstrate that voluntary desegregation could work if people had a valid choice in selecting a good school for their children. Cohen was clearly a strong shaping force in support of the school.

It was decisionmaking time. Should I take the I.S. 227 position or remain as Director of the Teacher Center at Bay Shore? It was both an easy and difficult decision. Over a period of ten years I had helped to develop the Teacher Center into a nationally recognized teacher renewal program at Bay Shore Junior High. Although the center continued to receive national recognition through my book, *The Work Experience of Teachers and Professional Burnout*, and Sarason's and Devaney's writings, it was time to apply my experience in new directions.[2] At Bay Shore, I had become convinced that the public had almost no understanding of the real world of teachers and that there was little dialogue between school and community groups about ways to act together to save our public schools. The position at I.S. 227 would give me a firsthand opportunity to expand my ideas for a school-community coalition based on the development of mutually satisfying projects. But this was also a high-risk position because although I was going to teach a course in human relations as part of the Administration and Supervision program, I would not be teaching on a tenured track. My contract would be on a grant and I would also be outside the Board of Education and community networks. I would be giving up a tenured position at Bay Shore with excellent working conditions, and most important I would be leaving all of the close friends and relationships I had developed there.

Yet, I was filled with enthusiasm. I did not realize all the hours the position, teaching at the college, and commuting would take. In reality, I

would have two full-time jobs: one at the college teaching six hours, and another at I.S. 227.

## *THE REAL QUESTIONS BEING ASKED AT I.S. 227*

I spent the month of July on vacation, yet it was difficult for me to put the project aside. It was at this time that the real questions concerning the project became more clear for me. Would I, would we (whoever the *we* would be), be able to:

- Help the school and college to be truly responsive to community needs?
- Demonstrate that voluntary desegregation could work?
- Facilitate the development of a positive coalition among the different constituencies making up the project (students, teachers, administrators, college staff, community, parents, interested others such as the United Parent Association or Advocates for Children)?
- Enable Queens College faculty members to play a significant role at I.S. 227 and in the community? (Significant, in my mind, meant faculty members being in the school working with teachers, students and administrators, but also being active in supporting local community projects.)
- Develop a psychological sense of community in which each member and each constituency were clearly involved in the I.S. 227 community education project at some level?

## *THE CONSTITUENCIES*

I began work in August 1980. A summer orientation program for new students and their parents had been planned and needed to be organized. After that I anticipated creating some new projects: a teacher training program; a parent education program; activities for single parents; an evening counseling program for parents and community members; an adult education program; a series of community forums that could help staff and community be more aware of each other's needs and resources; a

series of community-based curriculum projects for students; an ongoing program for senior citizens in the school that could help tutoring students and courses for the seniors; some type of leadership and peer counseling program for students to help develop positive outlets for anticipated racial problems; and, finally, an Early Bird and after school program for students whose parents worked. I knew that if these programs were developed there would be a steady flow of parents and community members into the school and of teachers and students into the community. The first step was to get to know the various constituencies in the school, community and college. I began with the school. During August the process of setting up the new student and parent orientation program helped me to begin to know the school staff and how things were done. My first impression of Anthony Sanfilippo, the principal, was that he was a doer and that he was in charge, but I was not absolutely certain that he was strongly committed to community involvement. I sensed that he viewed my suburban school credentials with more than a little suspicion. His vision of my role was to help provide an early morning and after school program for students, mainly along recreational lines. I immediately saw that we were not on the same wavelength. I saw myself as a planner and implementer of many more activities. In the school Anthony had complete support from his assistant principal, Bernie Alfant, and two teachers, Barry Wiesenfeld and Ken Greenberg, who helped out in the office part time with scheduling and special projects. Anthony was referred to as "the boss."

The teaching staff, numbering around 60, represented different groups. There were the old-timers who had come to I.S. 227 from a variety of tough schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan and who seemed jubilant to be in a school that was safe, clean, and was known as an "experimental school" with a direct line to the Chancellor. This did not always prove to be the case. Although the school had few supplies, books, and paper, the teachers seemed to enjoy thoroughly the students who also spoke of being "saved" from enrollment in other schools that they reported as being overcrowded, understaffed and poorly administered. Yet, there was the ever-present fear that this school, in spite of its newness and special relationship with Queens College and the Chancellor, would also go down the drain and become like their "old school." Many staff members voiced concern that the doubling of the enrollment that year to 800 and the next year's (1982-1983) increase to 1,200 would have a negative impact on the school. Next year the students would also be older and they would be more trouble. And then there were the new teachers—even more thankful that they had landed a job, and in a good school no less! Some were graduates of Queens College, and had served

at the school the first year as student teachers. Many were inexperienced and would need a great deal of help with everyday classroom management and discipline. There were also approximately twenty student teachers each semester, a cafeteria staff of five who prepared breakfast and lunch, and a secretarial staff in the principal's office.

There was also the college staff. Associate Dean Sid Trubowitz, Director of the Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades, served as liaison between school and college. Clarence Bunch, Chairman of the Department of Secondary Education, was the specialist in the arts and took over Sid's role when he was on sabbatical from February 1981 to September 1981. Dean John Lidstone, a very kind and sensitive person with a strong interest in developing good alternatives to the present junior high system, gave his constant support. This group was at the school each day, working with the teachers, the principal, and the student teachers. Bob Edgar, a remarkable teacher with many years at Queens College, seemed right at home in the social studies classes, helping teachers and students. Art Salz was working to set up an alternative program in the fifth and sixth grades called the "Family." He had many years' experience in open education and liked being at the school. Debbie Elkins, a retired Queens College professor, was working with the language arts teacher. A wonderful woman, with a very helpful manner, she welcomed this new opportunity. There were other faculty members at the school, but in my opinion these people were the core of the college mission.

In looking at the constituency that made up the school and college, I saw that it was a white male leadership group: John, Sid, Clarence, myself, Anthony, Bernie, and Kenny Greenberg. How did this appear to the community, which was black, Latin, Asian, and white, and whose homes and community organizations were often headed by women who were hard workers, self-reliant, and not easily co-opted? I realized that any hiring of staff had to acknowledge the immediate need for minority women in leadership positions.

The constituencies that made up the I.S. 227 community were quite disparate. The parents represented neighborhoods throughout the borough of Queens and they held a variety of different agenda for the children. Some wanted a safe school, describing I.S. 227 as a "kind of private school." Others were fleeing schools that were tipped too much in the direction of one ethnic or racial group. They wanted a school that represented, as many reported, "a healthy mix of blacks, whites, Asians, Indians, etc." Other parents were interested in the Queens College involvement in the school. Then there were the new immigrants who, by word of mouth, sought out the best schools and did whatever was

necessary to get their children into a good school like I.S. 227. All of these parents had in common a deep desire to have a good education for their children, and they believed that was possible at this school. They were not going to settle for less. In effect, they were high-risk takers who would not accept bureaucratic mandates in place of good education. Their energy and commitment made I.S. 227 a very special place.

There were the local people who, because of Judge Sifton's ruling, had to enroll their children in other schools. Although they lived near the school, they did not fit into the court-mandated racial quota. These people were pushing I.S. 227 to provide afternoon and special programs for their children.

There were also local political leaders and citizens who were very skeptical and suspicious of the school. Here in their neighborhood was a school that had children from all over Queens but, in fact, had very few local children. What was the school going to do for the community? Would the community be able to use the library, gym facilities, etc.? And there were the other public and private schools, teachers and administrators in the area, many of whom were angry at and jealous of the new facilities, staff and the special relationship with Queens College that I.S. 227 was enjoying. These schools were being viewed as having less worth than I.S. 227. Clearly, demands were going to be made on the administration to share the school's resources, but many community members viewed cooperation as less than likely.

And there were the visitors to the school. Almost daily there would be people from other schools asking about the program, visiting classes, and so on. At times it seemed as if there were more adults in the school than children. And these people took time—the time of Anthony, Sid, Clarence, myself, Bernie and Ken!

There were various groups and individuals who seemed to have a special interest in making I.S. 227 work. Betty Felton of the United Parents Association was committed to helping parent groups take a strong role in school policy and curriculum. Jeff Aubrey of Elmcor, a local adult and children education and recreational center, was interested in sharing school and community resources. Ivan Lafayette, a local assemblyman, wanted to have I.S. 227 work with other schools in the area. Andrew Jackson of the Langston Hughes Library sought to share the library's extensive ethnic literature section and to establish exchanges with the school faculty. Susan Jones of Single Parent, Inc. had plans for developing programs for single parents at the school. Ellen Libretto of the Queensborough Public Library worked toward integrating the activities of the library and school. Donald Stewart of the NAACP was dedicated to helping the school complete its mission as a source of

support and education for black children and parents. Mary Sarro and Helen Vauruska of the local Planning Board 3 had ideas for developing community projects with the school. Spencer McLaughlin and Bill Lynch of the New York City Commission on Human Rights saw I.S. 227 as a way to help stabilize neighborhood housing and serve as a place for parent information on tenant rights and student education in racial equality. Rose Hershenson, coordinator of senior citizens in the East Elmhurst area, was interested in senior citizen programs during the day at the school. She conceived a workshop series involving recreation, language, psychology, and literature that could be taught by people from the college, school, and community. Others, such as Ann Morse, Educational Assistant to Queensborough President Donald Manes, and Helen Sears, District Leader in the 34th Assembly District, wanted to support the development of good schools. On the whole, there were many others who were interested in the school, a total list too numerous to mention.

Finally, there were the children: 800 fifth, sixth and seventh grade students from every possible ethnic group and income level. Kids with packs on their backs who came across the borough on subways and buses. The school to them was a "good school," a place where they could learn, be safe, get involved with a college, take trips, see visitors, and be asked over and over again why they liked I.S. 227. They were glad to be there, but they also feared that the school might get too big and become like their old schools. But they would probably be gone before that happened. Only the teachers and the community would remain to face the more difficult question of how you keep a good school good as the newness, shine, and the aura of a college wears thin. In all of these various constituencies involved in I.S. 227 there were little glimpses—statements made and then covered up—that somehow the hopes and aspirations of the project would be shattered and this experiment, too, would become like the old schools. Every one of these constituencies was filled with people who had been through too many programs, projects, and schools that had manipulated or misused their trust and commitment. I.S. 227 represented a place where they would be safe, where one could learn and teach, a place to develop support with school and community, a place to stop running. The opportunity for a different life was here. Would it work?

## *BUILDING MY OWN CONSTITUENCY*

After a month on the job, I realized that I would be interacting with a group that had already worked together for a year. My previous experience was quite different from that of others in the school. I needed to

establish points of contact. I had easy access to all the groups that made up the school and I had no other agenda than to spend time with these groups and develop projects that could utilize their resources. I had a strong track record as a change agent and I understood that the development of trust and mutual respect among groups would be my first mission. I also understood that this would take time.

It was a lonely task and for many days I wondered why I had left the comfort of the Bay Shore Teacher Center. There seemed to be so many groups at I.S. 227 that had little contact with each other. I had to work hard to remember my beginning days at the Bay Shore Center were also filled with the same professional anxiety. The excitement at I.S. 227 was different but the needs and caring of the people were not. The basic question was still the same: What are the needs of the people and how do I help them to develop projects to help themselves and others? I realized that the personal question associated with the project—Would I win here or would I merely survive?—would always remain. In a real sense the needs of the different constituencies in the project were very much tied to my own. If I could empower groups to seek out trusting and mutually satisfying relationships with "other" groups—parents, students, community, blacks, whites, Asians, women, college staff, Anthony's group—then my own mission would make a difference.

## The Development of the Community Resource Room

In order to encourage the different constituencies to share resources, we needed a home for our project. We needed a comfortable place that was easily accessible to the school staff, students, college staff, the community, and the school administration. It had to be suitable for teacher training, parent education, adult education, and counseling, and serve as a comfortable drop-by center where people could get to know each other in an informal way. Most of all I wanted a place near Anthony so I could involve him in our process. He suggested a classroom right across from his office that could be converted for our use.

## The Summer Institute

The summer institute for students and parents new to I.S. 227 was my first project in constituency building. The last two weeks in August had been set aside to provide an orientation and arts program for new students and to provide workshops for their parents.[3] I was surprised by the enrollment: over 100 students and their parents showed up each day, eager to participate. Clearly they were worried about the school and how they would do. In our workshops, one parent after the other voiced concern about their children traveling by subway or bus so far from

home. But these very same parents stated that they were not willing to have their children receive an inferior and unsafe education in another school. They were afraid, but they were making a commitment to I.S. 227. They were taking a chance with their children, but it was their best bet. Grandparents, Indians, Asians, blacks, middle-class whites—they all showed up anxious for some of the magic and excitement promised by a school guided by Queens College and the Chancellor of the city schools. Even the teachers came, although school was still two weeks away. Bringing in supplies and checking their rooms, they stopped by the community resource room for coffee and met parents and new students. It was an exciting time, but it was also a sad time. Each day we had 50 to 100 students from the neighborhood hanging around the schoolyard fence asking if they could play. Not enrolled in the school and with no real chance in the future, they spent hours talking with me. Many voiced anger that they could not get into the school and resented kids from other neighborhoods coming to what they viewed should be their place. I made a promise to myself to set up a program the following summer to include all the kids, whether enrolled in the school or from the neighborhood. What a disparity: children and parents fortunate enough to enroll in I.S. 227 felt unsure but excited about this adventure, while outside the gate were kids and parents who saw the opportunity but could not get in.

## I Want What's Best for My Children

During the summer institute I saw the tremendous interest of parents in I.S. 227. Anthony's office was filled with parents trying to get their children into the school. The phone rang constantly with inquiries, but only a small percentage of these parents would be eligible. The openings, according to Judge Sifton's formula, left room primarily for white students. Anthony and the guidance counselor were gracious and helpful to the parents, but there was little they could do. This experience will always remain with me as I continue to encounter those who say that parents do not care about what happens to their children in school.

## Hiring the Community Education Staff

It was proposed that we should have a community education specialist, a resource room aide with counseling skills and the ability to speak Spanish fluently, and a secretary. Two areas were particularly important to me. First, I saw early on that we needed more women and minority members in leadership positions. Second, I wanted the community education specialist and resource room aide to be knowledgeable about the local community and to be strongly committed to desegregation. We placed an

advertisement with the *New York Times* and the *Amsterdam News* and were overwhelmed with applications. The budget crunch at the Federal level was just starting and many people in government projects were out of work. In the interviews, though, it was hard to find people with experience in community involvement and with special knowledge of East Elmhurst. After going through September with little luck, I was fortunate to come across a bright black woman, Johanna Duncan, who had community education experience and a knowledge of Corona-East Elmhurst, where she worked in a day care center. We also found a community resource room aide, Terry Obradovich, who could speak Spanish and had a great deal of experience as a PTA president and as a member of the United Parents Association. Both women came aboard right away. Our secretarial position was filled by a parent at I.S. 227, Claire Press. Claire's experience was particularly important because she had been a leader in the school's recruitment drive the past year. Working with Bernie Alfant, the assistant principal, she became our chief recruiting person, spending many days and evenings at the Board of Education and at feeder schools. It was a good team: a suburban, white psychologist, a black woman with good planning and assertiveness skills, an Hispanic woman committed to local school and community improvement and to assisting immigrants, and a white woman who wanted to make I.S. 227 an exemplary model for other schools to follow.

## The Early Bird Program

The first order of business for the school year was to reestablish the Early Bird program.[4] With the help of Barry Wiesenfeld, the school's administrative assistant, a number of student teachers were asked to develop activities for children whose parents had to get to work early. A number of faculty members were also hired to set up a game room, counseling activities, and extra help classes. By the end of September we had set up a chorus, audiovisual club, guitar and recorder club, story telling circle, crafts club, music club, disc jockey club, classes in drama, origami, painting, modern dance, and English as a second language, as well as a game room, reading clinic, basketball games, discussion activities, and counseling services. Each morning before school the cafeteria was filled with students having breakfast, and then from 8:00 to 8:40 participating in one of the Early Bird clubs. Children who participated received an Early Bird pin designed by Clarence Bunch of the college staff. This program was important because it brought children together in fun activities, helped working parents who needed a supervised place early in the morning to leave their children, and provided a lab for student teachers to experiment with short-term, high-interest activities. Most

important, it provided a time for children from different neighborhoods and ethnic groups to meet and learn to be with each other.

## The After School Program

In September we also began to develop an after school program. It was designed to provide additional time for students to get to know and respect each other. From approximately 3:45 to 6:00, children were able to participate in a school musical, dance group, basketball, swimming, printing, school newspaper, volleyball, peer tutoring, gymnastics, opera appreciation, international dance, media production, and to receive counseling and career information. In addition, there were activities planned to utilize the Queens College Computer Center, gymnasium, and Environmental Teaching Center at Caumsett State Park.

## The Mentorship Program

By November we were also able to continue the mentorship program for students.[3] Non-teaching periods were arranged so that interested teachers would be able to meet with four or five students to work on individual investigations of real community and school problems. Headed by Dave Sills, an exceptionally able Language Arts teacher, our hope was to involve students in issues confronting the school and community: crime, police protection, mass transportation, integration, adult literacy, technology, desegregation, neighborhood stabilization and tenant rights.

## Adult Education, Parent Education, Single Parent and Counseling Programs Begin

By November we had also received many requests for single parent support groups and counseling and adult education programs. By opening the building four nights a week and on Saturday mornings, we were able to develop a variety of services. With the help of the local assemblyman and the director of the Queens College Adult Education Program, we arranged an adult education series emphasizing English as a second language, typing, consumer rights, and health courses two nights per week. On other nights parent education courses in adolescent development, single parent education, and counseling were available both to parents and community members.

The community resource room was the site of many of these activities and became a center of school-community interaction both during the day and night. Terry Obradovich was invaluable in handling the questions asked by Spanish-speaking parents. Johanna Duncan and I found our skills were best utilized in heading up the parent education workshop series. When this activity became too large, we were able to call on Sue Fallon, a graduate of the Queens College Marriage and Family Program.

Her work was later supplemented by Sue Jones of Single Parents, Inc. The counseling program was headed up by a wonderful, kind person, Dr. Luis Antonelli, a member of the Queens College Counseling Education program. Dr. Antonelli was able to develop a counseling program utilizing interns from Queens College. At the same time that these programs were going on, I was teaching a Queens College graduate course in human relations at the school for teachers from I.S. 227 and neighboring schools. Finally, Clarence Bunch was able to develop at the college a Saturday arts program for children. This program was again open to children from both I.S. 227 and the community. I could still see the faces of the children in the summer who could not participate because they did not go to I.S. 227. We were moving to make serving their needs a part of our mission.

### Getting the Children Out of the Building

The community held many opportunities for curriculum projects for children and teachers. A quick tour of the East Elmhurst and Queens College area suggests a host of interesting projects for students: LaGuardia Airport, Astoria Film Studio, Kennedy Airport, Con Edison, Bulova Watch Company, Steinway Piano Factory, and so forth. Terry, Johanna, and I encouraged teachers to take their classes on visits to places of interest in our community. We set up a series of trips to the Queens College Environmental and Teaching Center at Caumsett on Long Island. Working with some wonderful teachers such as Fran Urso, a science teacher at the school, a number of students took overnight trips to the old Marshall Field estate at Caumsett that overlooked Long Island Sound. Under the direction of Dr. Phil White, Caumsett had developed exceptional nature study and teacher-training programs. Supported by an excellent staff, Dr. White took a special interest in our school and our children. Many students had never been away for an overnight program, but Dr. White made them feel like the estate was their home. We helped prepare the food, waded through the marsh, took nature walks, told stories by the fireplace, and drank hot cider at night. I saw how frightened some of the children were to be away from the city. The suburbs seemed to represent another world and they did not trust all the space and the quiet. Many did not know how to swim. Although only 25 or so miles from I.S. 227, Caumsett represented a totally different way of life.

## *FORMING A GESTALT*

By December we had begun to form a bond among the different constituencies in the school and community. The evening and Saturday

adult education, parent education, single parent, counseling, and arts programs had demonstrated both to the parents and community members that we were interested in their needs. The Early Bird, mentorship, and after school programs had provided new ways for students to get to know each other. The resource room offered a place for different groups from the staff, college and community to meet informally. Although Anthony still seemed to question the efficacy of our work, he was spending more time in our room and was supportive. Just prior to Christmas, we held a party in the resource room, inviting members from each constituency. It was a wonderful experience to see Queens College President Saul Cohen talking with a group of senior citizens and the local planning board negotiating with Anthony to use the building. We were beginning to develop our niche.

A good example of an unanticipated issue can be seen in the special education crisis that occurred in the fall of 1980. At that time, two special classes were sent to I.S. 227 because of poor conditions at their previous school. This move was made without consultation with Queens College staff, a move that could enormously complicate an evolving and fluid situation. The college staff appealed to Saul Cohen, who threatened to pull out unless the Chancellor rectified the situation. When this happened, many college staff and school staff were both angry and at loose ends. One directive by the Board could change the whole relationship of the college with I.S. 227 and wreck everything that had been done. School staff talked of the "same old thing" and saw the move to place these classes in the school as the first step to make this special place just "like the old school with all the fights." The situation was so tenuous that, in spite of all the programs and momentum, it was like skating on thin ice. And what about the poor special class students and teachers who came to the school under these circumstances? Viewed as intruders and a threat to the spirit and safety of the school, how could they be treated fairly and be cared for? In the subsequent negotiations only one class came, with the promise to find a solution in the future. To their credit, many of the I.S. 227 staff and students came forward to help the special class students and staff. But the event showed the vulnerability of the project.

Another issue we faced was a possible cutback in Federal funding. Would money be slashed for desegregation? Where could we get new funding? Without positive momentum for the school, the college staff would be in no position to encourage their colleagues to teach courses at the school and take a more active role in research activities being fostered by this project. Despite everything, however, college faculty members Bob Edgar, Art Salz, and Debbie Elkins kept the positive momentum

going. Bob kept working with the social studies staff, helping them to develop a number of multicultural learning packets. Art, working with teachers Marjorie Allen, Dorothy Hersey, and Marsha Dorin, developed a successful school-within-a-school program called the "Family." Debbie, working with the language arts teachers, helped them to develop appropriate teaching strategies for heterogeneous classes.

It was clear that I.S. 227 was entering another stage. Stage one had seen the opening of the building, ordering of supplies, hiring of teachers, arranging of relationships between the school and college, and some initial efforts at community involvement. But that stage was over. The new stage required some nitty-gritty work developing curriculum, teacher training, and a discipline code supported jointly by staff, parents, and community. The problem was not in developing these programs. The needs were there and they could be handled. Rather the problem, as I saw it, was how our project could help meet these needs.

## Making the Mission Clear for All

By January 1981 I felt that we had to bring more people from the community into the school process and more teachers and college staff into community activities. It was my belief that a series of forums would help the school staff identify the positive contributions of the school as well as point out the problems that come with rapid growth. Things were happening but the school was not perfect. Support built only on highly visible programs can rapidly diminish when the other needs of students, staff, and community are not met. An honest, firsthand appraisal by both school and community groups must be made. In addition, I felt that time must be provided to help the teaching staff participate in a strategic planning session that would provide an opportunity for self-development, staff development, curriculum planning, and the identification of needed support services. In this way, the staff could become more clear about their mission and how each member could be counted on to contribute to the developing programs at I.S. 227. Put more simply, I saw that we needed a commitment from the community and staff that they would continue to help make I.S. 227 a good school even as they experienced the pains and dissatisfactions of new growth.

## The Forums

In developing the first forum in late January 1981, I asked Seymour Sarason of Yale to act as facilitator for the meeting. My plan was to invite Anthony, John, Clarence, Sid, leaders from the college and school faculties, and parents. I also planned to invite Saul Cohen, Jeff Aubry of Elmcor, local Assemblyman Ivan Lafayette, and other representatives

from local hospitals, police, planning boards, the Human Rights Commission, the Queensborough president's office, local businessmen, the Adult Education program at Queens College, and others. Over 30 invitations were sent out. The meeting was scheduled for the community resource room from 10 a.m. to noon with a lunch following the meeting.

What emerged in the meeting were strong feelings on the part of some community representatives that I.S. 227 was not serving their needs. It was clear that information about many of the community programs at the school was not reaching the leaders in the community. The meeting also seemed to be a new experience for the teachers and college staff who had little direct contact with community workers. When I asked each participant to talk about their needs and resources, it became apparent that there were many direct and concrete tasks both within the school and community that could be attended to by this group. At the close of the meeting, I asked the participants if they wished to continue and asked them to write down the projects they might want to become involved in. At the luncheon many of the participants stated that they felt honored to be a part of such a program and were committed to helping I.S. 227 make it.

During the next two weeks Johanna Duncan and I visited each participant and were able to talk more extensively about the school and the importance of their involvement in the process. With these data, a second forum was scheduled for late February at the borough president's office. Its purpose was to identify the various projects related to I.S. 227 being carried out by forum members and to raise the question of how to replicate the Queens College–I.S. 227 collaboration model. Among the projects represented at that meeting were:

- *Malcolm Press, Local Business Person.* Developed with Ray Zelazny of the Queens College Continuing Education program a Jazz Evening (in March) as a part of the registration program for the Queens College Continuing Education program at I.S. 227.
- *Spencer McLaughlin and William Lynch, Human Rights Commission.* Developing in District 30 and with I.S. 227 a Tenants Rights Workshop for students. Developing a workshop series for April-May 1981 with the Cornell University Extension project and I.S. 227 School/Community CONNECTIONS staff.
- *Ivan Lafayette, Assemblyman 34th Assembly District.* Helped to support school exchanges between I.S. 227 staff and students with other local district schools and community organizations.

- *Clifford Wilson, Assemblyman.* Support for possible borough-wide directory listing community groups.
- *Andrew Jackson, Langston Hughes Library.* Make the library available for use by I.S. 227 students.
- *Mary Sarro, District Manager Community Planning Board #3.* Met with I.S. 227 School/Community CONNECTIONS program representatives to help our staff be aware of projects and resources available in the community.

In May a third forum was held at the Langston Hughes Library in Corona. Our purpose in holding the forum at Langston Hughes was to help solidify the relationship of I.S. 227 with community organizations. Over 50 community, school, and university representatives were invited, including staff from local public and private schools, the Advocates for Children, the United Parents Association, Single Parents, Inc., parents from I.S. 227, and NAACP representatives. At this meeting plans were made for the I.S. 227 drama class to present a play at the library and for other students to become involved in child care at the local day care center. A plea was made by a group of senior citizens to have ongoing classes in exercise, psychology, literature and language at the school in the fall. Plans were made for the summer institute at I.S. 227 which would include parents and children from the local community.

What was amazing in this forum process was the number of people who turned out for each meeting and who made a commitment to develop resource exchanges between the school and community. The meetings were exciting, fun, and concrete. By holding the meetings in different neighborhoods, we were able to demonstrate the special value and contributions of each group that made up the I.S. 227 community. For the school and college staff it provided a way for them to demonstrate their value to the community. For other public and private schools it provided ways for them to utilize the resources of Queens College and I.S. 227, and vice versa. My aim in developing the forums had been to offer community members opportunities to form a clearer picture of just what the school had to offer and what work needed to be done. My plea was, "Do not expect everything, but understand, challenge, and support what is being developed. There is a lot at stake and we do not want I.S. 227 to be one more casualty or example of a school with grand ideas and notions that killed itself because of overinflated promises and expectations." To the community, we said, "Be in the school, be present, know us and let us know you. Let's recognize our self-interest and see if we can mobilize our resources to help each other." These meetings helped the

leadership group to become more aware of what these different constituencies wanted and the very great importance of meeting their needs as well as promoting the project to the Board and college.

## Teacher Training

The second major project in the spring was to allow teachers to plan for the 1981-82 year. What were their needs and what resources would they require? Although he was not in favor of giving teachers release time to plan, Anthony, to his credit, agreed to allow on each school day in May for four teachers to be at Queens College to take part in a planning session that I would lead. Each group would come up with a summary statement of needs and suggestions that could be translated into a document for the entire school. Four substitutes would be hired each day to cover the teacher's classes. Clarence Bunch was most helpful in recruiting the substitutes from the student teacher group, and John Lidstone, as always, was supportive of the plan.

In these sessions I found that the most important staff need was the opportunity to talk about their concerns and to get to know each other. Over and over again I heard teachers saying that there was no place in the school to talk and plan with colleagues. There were few common prep and meeting times that could be used for such team planning.

Also, I found that discipline and teaching in a heterogeneous class were pressing issues. Many of the teachers were new and needed strategies to discipline children. Many felt at a loss to teach children with so many different abilities. The teachers were also worried about how children were relating to each other. There had been fights in the cafeteria and some students were isolating themselves into white and black groups. Recently, when a number of students began wearing pins to symbolize support for the black children found murdered in Atlanta, some white students had ripped them from their clothing. Would this terrible situation in Atlanta give rise to increased racial unrest in the school? In each group I heard the staff ask for more training, a clear definition of the school's discipline policy, more counseling for students, and more parent involvement in alleviating racial unrest in the school.

One teacher reported, "Hey, I've been through it all in Brooklyn and the Bronx. This school is a dream compared to the places I've been in—at least I can teach here and be safe. Why should I get involved in all this stuff? It will be ten years before things get bad here and I'll be long gone." But we were all in the same boat. We had to make choices here in East Elmhurst. What kind of community were we building? Would we opt for short personal gains, or make a commitment to do the things needed to make I.S. 227 a setting that would endure once the newness vanished?

Would the students only see the school as a temporary haven that would help them get into a select high school? Would the parents ignore a commitment to strong parent involvement and let the PTA be another cake-and-coffee group? Would the teachers settle for safety and let the school's discipline and curriculum needs drift? Would Anthony and the college faculty promise too much in their early effort to develop college and Board support and gloss over important curricular, disciplinary, and staff development issues? Would the community and politicians allow I.S. 227 the time to develop a real school-community support network, or would they be quick to blame teachers, Anthony, and the college for what they did not do? How could we encourage a commitment to a psychological community with so many people existing in such a tenuous situation? Could they dare to be different at I.S. 227, or would their commitment and trust be abused? We struggled each day with the most fundamental questions in the project.

## *A LOOK BACKWARD AND FORWARD*

In July of 1981 I decided to leave I.S. 227. It was a very difficult decision. We were at the edge of change. In June, John Lidstone and I, with the help of David Ramage of the New World Foundation, put together an exciting proposal involving the other public and private schools in the East Elmhurst area. With the support of Mary Sarro and Mary Vauruska of Planning Board 3, the Advocates for Children, and the United Parents Association, we wanted to organize a coalition that could share resources to make each of these schools a good school. Queens College faculty, I.S. 227 staff, community members, parents, and students in each of the area's six public and three parochial schools would commit their resources to the improvement of each school and so stabilize rapidly diminishing student enrollment in the public schools and hold down parochial enrollment, which was skyrocketing beyond capacity. Every school a good school was our aim.

It was extremely difficult to step aside from such a plan and from what had happened at I.S. 227. I had experienced a year of change beyond my innocent dreams and questions of the summer of 1980. Even though I was an outsider from the suburbs of Long Island, I saw that I could bring together others in the school and college to become truly responsive to community needs. I saw that voluntary desegregation could work if people believed that the school was safe and could educate their children. I saw that a coalition could be developed among students, teachers, parents, administrators, community members, and college faculty to support a school. I saw that a college could play a leading but equal role

with other constituencies in the coalition. I saw that a plan could be developed so that other schools in the area could become good schools.

Most importantly, I saw that students, teachers, administrators, community, and college faculty could endure together in spite of their differences and events beyond their control. Anthony left the school in July to take over his old superintendency. The school did not collapse and programs continued on. To me this is the most important message of the I.S. 227 experiment. If there is a strong coalition for support of the school and community, then neither crisis nor loss of an exciting leader will deter the coalition from building a good school. If the teachers, students, parents, and community members believe the school is a "good school" (as most people at I.S. 227 believed) then leaders from any of the constituencies can come and go. No one is indispensable. What is paramount is that an active coalition of these various constituencies continues to exist, and with them the capacity for developing exciting and novel alternatives.

The programs developed at I.S. 227 can be translated into other settings without a Saul Cohen or Frank Macchiarola or a Federal grant. What is required is an active coalition of parents, students, community members, teachers, and administrators who can say clearly what they want their school to be. The lesson of I.S. 227 is that the different constituencies that made up the school were also able to contribute their ideas and to make sure that alternatives were created to meet their needs. If others interested in developing good schools are to be inspired by this experiment, they need to know that they can succeed with the resources at hand.

The other name for I.S. 227 is the Louis Armstrong School. Armstrong, the great black trumpet player, lived less than a mile from the school. When he traveled throughout the world as a representative of the State Department after World War II, he was known as Ambassador Satch. During these trips Armstrong was often called on to play a favorite jazz classic, "All of Me," which he played with incredible zest and clarity. When asked by a jazz fan in Paris how he could get such sound and life out of one instrument, he replied, "I don't play alone—my spirit and excitement also come from the other guys in the band and the audience—sure I can go out and be good—but when I am really good the other guys help me make it happen—and the audience—they're always with me and make me go on." I.S. 227 is important in Armstrong's terms because they were a lot of guys and gals playing together and the audience was always there.

# NOTES

1. The development of a community school was a basic part of the design for the Louis Armstrong Middle School, which was agreed to in the Spring of 1979 by Queens College and the New York City Board of Education. The original planners of the collaboration envisioned the school as one that would serve the needs of the community and bring together children and adults from different races and backgrounds. Queens College applied for and received an Emergency School Assistance Act grant from the U.S. Office of Education. William Fibkins was selected by the college as Project Director to develop programs for recruitment, teacher training, community education, and expanded day activities.

2. William Fibkins, *The Work Experience of Teachers and Professional Burnout*, Teachers' Center, Inc., Fairfield, CT, 1980; Seymour Sarason, *Work, Aging, and Social Change: Professionals and the One Life-One Career Imperative*, New York, Free Press, 1977; and, Kathleen Devaney, ed., *Essays on Teachers' Centers*, San Francisco, Teachers Center Exchange, 1977.

3. The idea for the summer orientation came from discussions John Lidstone and Sidney Trubowitz had had with Seymour Sarason on the problem of managing the rapid growth of the pupil population.

4. This program had been initiated the previous year mostly through the efforts of Betsy Kaufman, Professor of Education.

5. This program was originally the brainchild of Mr. Sanfilippo. We gave it our total support.

CHAPTER 7

# *And What Is a Community School?*

Johanna Duncan

It was early in September of 1980 when I first heard about the proposed Queens College relationship to the Louis Armstrong Middle School (I.S 227). The result of the NAACP lawsuit and subsequent court order was distrust and hostility among parents and youngsters in the neighborhoods surrounding I.S. 227. Plans needed to be formulated to address these negative feelings if wholesome school-community relations were to be built. The Community Education Center was established to direct and coordinate activities involving the students, parents, Queens College participants and any other interested community residents.

Even though there had been some publicity about this new project and some job advertisements for a Community Education Coordinator had been placed in the *New York Times*, it was through a close friend and former employer, Gloria Shepharo, that I first learned about the job search. At that time I was working on the development and coordination of several projects for the Division of Adult and Continuing Education at York College, and was not quite sure that I wanted to apply for the position. I was, however, very interested in learning more about the aspects of the program Gloria had described. The need for constructive interrelations among parent, community and educators had long been ignored. I was especially intrigued that the Board of Education and an institution of higher education were collaboratively supporting the framework for a refocused approach to this recurrent problem.

I was familiar with I.S. 227's history and its neighborhood issues both from media coverage and from some firsthand contact. I recognized the importance and special need for an outreach project there. I was espe-

cially enthused by the possibility of successfully dealing with the divisive pressures which this school and community were experiencing.

After the entire staff was hired, the first few weeks were spent clarifying project goals and design. Aside from the objectives outlined in the application for Federal funding, one of our first goals was to learn about each other in terms of our strengths and weaknesses. As a new staff team, we recognized that our operation could only be enhanced by knowing what skills and experiences each brought to the project. Each of us independently outlined what we thought our mission was and was not, what were some of the opportunities for us, and so on. This not only revealed how much we had in common and the variety of resources among us, but really got us talking. The potential and need for this project became much clearer.

Although several first steps were taken simultaneously, one of the major activities we initially engaged in was the identification of, and orientation to, the populations we were to serve. Based on the proposal and Federal guidelines, we were to develop meaningful relationships between and among the following groups and individuals:

- Children and young adolescents of I.S. 227 and the neighboring community.
- Educators and instructors of I.S. 227 as well as other interested parents and adults who did not have a child attending this school. (Even though our primary focus was on the local community, most activities were open to anyone interested in attending, resulting in parent participants from the entire city.)
- Community residents of all ages and socioeconomic strata within our target community.
- Community service/educational support organizations, representatives and sponsors of various community outreach organizations, educational programs, community development corporations, social service type agencies, child care centers, and the like.

To develop these relationships, heavy emphasis was placed on getting to know these various groups and individuals by involving ourselves in several formal and informal activities. We wanted to know these people as more than names on a piece of paper. Since we started in November we were able to attend several holiday parties at both I.S. 227 and Queens College. We used these gatherings as opportunities to meet new people.

Informal conversations did, in fact, teach us a great deal about the needs and interests of each institution's teaching staff. We received several concrete suggestions for implementing our program, such as workshop topics.

We developed a means for ongoing contact with the school staff by going to the teachers' cafeteria at various times of the day and encouraging people to visit our community resource room. One drawing card was the availability of free coffee (and sometimes cookies, cake or danish). The daily copy of the *New York Times* was always available. As it turned out, many people learned about our program indirectly because they came into our room for coffee, purposely set up at the far end of the room so they would, literally, have to enter the room. While we would not accept any donations towards the cost of coffee, we requested that no one take their coffee out of the room. This policy made people spend at least a moment or two in the room, which allowed them to learn more about us and our plans. We found that several teachers genuinely enjoyed taking a short coffee break, as well as having the opportunity to glance at the daily newspaper. A brief description of our program was prepared and strategically placed near the newspapers.

While we were always very responsive to new and regular room visitors, we were very careful not to jam program information down their throats, or approach a person who just appeared to want to look around or perhaps meet someone there. If the papers were not available, some people would pick up whatever else we had on the table to read. This simple physical arrangement not only encouraged others to read about our program, but also led to questions, comments, and resource sharing. For example, a teacher might see one of our notices about a workshop and recommend a particular resource person, or mention a recent article on the subject, or request permission to post the notice in an agency with which he or she had some affiliation.

The actual location of our room was also significant in that we were directly across the hall from the main office, which is the one place where all teachers report daily, as well as being the area with the most traffic. In order to encourage parents and other school visitors to stop in our room, I prepared a large sign that read, "Welcome Parents . . . stop in and have a cup of coffee." We were amazed to see how many parents (and others) responded to the sign. Often people would stop in, recognizing that our office was specifically designed for them as well as other community people. Each drop-in visitor was one more contact developed. In order to secure their interest, we would ask them to sign our guest book, which would automatically place them on our mailing list.

In agreement with our program design and with the expressed interests

of many parents at I.S. 227 and the community, one of the first activities to be carried out was the implementation of a parent education program. We hoped that the positive involvement and interchange of parents with different racial and cultural backgrounds would be a starting point towards the improvement of race relations among the participating parents and indirectly for their children. To do this it was important to find a means of alleviating some of the hostility engendered by the community's sense of "losing" its neighborhood school, while at the same time carrying out the college's and school's interest in the development of effective parent education offerings.

We began by sponsoring parent workshops. These workshops would be open to any and all interested parents (whether they had a child attending I.S. 227 or not). In order to develop a workshop series that would attract parents into the school, these workshops would have to be geared directly towards their interests and conveniently scheduled. Several useful comments had already been given to us by parents and teachers. Even though these were helpful, I felt that it was more important to get a wider sampling of parent attitudes. For that, a more formalized system of feedback collection was needed. With the help and suggestions of the other staff members, a "Parent Interest Inventory" was developed. This inventory was designed to determine whether or not workshops would be something parents would attend, what topics they would like covered, what times would be most convenient, where they would like to see them held, what resources or talents might they be willing to share, and also provide them with a formal means of presenting any questions, comments, or suggestions.

To introduce the planned workshop series and to distribute questionnaires, I asked to be included on the agenda of the school's first general PTA meeting. After introducing our long-range plans for parents and the purpose of the questionnaire, the discussion was open for comments and questions. I found that even though everyone thought that the sponsorship of workshops was a good idea, there was an overall skepticism about whether any workshop activity of this type would really be well attended.

I understood this initial response because I knew that their pessimism was primarily based on their past experiences with activities of this type and that levels of parent participation historically had been poor. One individual expressed this perception by saying, "Even with the best of intentions, Johanna, we find that parents just don't come out for these things. You always find one or two who always come out for everything, while the majority of parents in this school, as well as others in the

community, rarely come out for anything other than an occasional PTA meeting. This is not to discourage you, Johanna. It's just that we don't want you to be too disappointed if this whole idea doesn't go much farther than this meeting."

The Parent Interest Inventory was printed. To prevent it from getting lost in the maze of other school notices, it was xeroxed on brightly colored paper (at the time, all the school notices were white). To reach as many parents as possible, it was not only distributed at the general PTA meeting and at school for students to take home, but at all other parent-community activities sponsored around that time. While it was important to distribute information to as many people as possible, it also helped that I was personally available at these events to answer questions. The one-to-one contact was in many instances the necessary impetus to get someone to read, answer, and return questionnaires.

Bill Fibkins manned the Community Resource Room to greet parents and to introduce the inventory during special events. Claire Press, the project secretary, as a parent of an I.S. 227 student, had a unique familiarity with many of the parents, making assurances about our credibility unnecessary. Terry Obradovich, the Community Resource Assistant, who was very involved with a number of parent associations on a local and city-wide level, was bilingual, and quite helpful in our interaction with Hispanic parents. We found that there were many non-English speaking Hispanic parents who would come to school meetings to show their concern, but would then have a great deal of difficulty understanding what was going on because of a language barrier. Terry's ability to speak Spanish not only helped these parents better understand the particular activity that they were attending (she would translate any item that they had questions about), but also enabled us to get their reactions that might have otherwise been lost. We found out later that this type of contact also encouraged English speaking Hispanic parents' attendance in the sponsored workshops. The 189 inventories returned gave us a suitable number of responses to justify going ahead with this workshop series, as well as some valuable insight as to how it might best be offered.

Although the majority of responses were from I.S. 227 parents, we did receive several responses from parents who did not have a child attending I.S. 227. Moreover, we found that most of these parents had at least one other child attending another school and that the age range of their children ran from two to twenty-four. Since we knew that many of our parents worked full-time, we had requested an indication of a preferred day of the week, time, and location. On the basis of parent responses, we

decided to schedule workshops on Tuesday mornings, Wednesday evenings, Thursday afternoons, and Saturday mornings. The greatest interest was in the following topics:

- How to tutor your child.
- Concerns of a working mother.
- Long range educational planning.
- Single parenting.
- Resume writing skills.
- Re-entry into the job market.
- Women in the labor force.
- College selection/admission.
- Home maintenance.

I was advised *not* to suggest the last five topics as possible offerings. Among the reasons given to me included an anticipated lack of parent interest in these topics. The question of inappropriateness was based on the belief that, unless our offerings were directly related to the subject of parenting, they would not be of any real benefit to children nor would they be of interest to the parents. My insistence on listing these topics was based not only on my past experience, but, more importantly, because I simply did not agree with the common perception that parents will only be attracted by activities concerning parenting. My experience has been that traditional parent offerings, emphasizing only the problems of raising youngsters, have often failed to attract sizeable and continuing participation. I also felt that these offerings were related to the interests of their children.

If you get a parent into a school building, that counts for something. It may very well be, I argued, that parents who do not generally attend certain "parenting" type activities (including the traditional school meetings, PTA and so forth) will attend a different sort of enrichment activity, especially one that has been developed in direct response to their indicated interests. Parents have cited numerous reasons for their nonparticipation in traditional school functions, ranging from general mistrust or disenchantment with the public school system to time constraints. If I were to succeed where others had failed, our approach had to be presented in such a way that parents would feel that there is something in it for them. Even though these type of activities may at first seem to be beneficial only to the parents, I had found that there was potential for

indirect benefits to children, including the benefits that come from improved self-esteem on the part of the parents.

I have worked with many adults who have openly expressed some very real concerns about not knowing certain things, those things they feel they would know *if only* they had a college education. Despite the fact that most of these adults had completed high school, many of them believed that their formal education was inadequate. Whether valid or not, this was a very deep concern for them personally. It is interesting that the majority of these parents (who were racially, culturally and ethnically mixed) were determined to have their children attend college. However, the process of academic preparation, especially for college, often turns out to be frustrating for parents who are embarrassed by their unfamiliarity with certain procedures and subject areas (such as the new math or the metric system), with completing standardized forms, knowing what an SAT exam is, knowing how to select a suitable school, college or technical institute, and so forth. Parents have expressed to me how this frustration often builds up and is sometimes transferred to the child directly, responding to their inability to answer their child's questions with, "Leave me alone. Why do you ask me so many questions anyway? Ask your teacher! That's what they get paid for!", or indirectly, as in the case of parents who become furious with their child over something totally unrelated, like not taking out the garbage. These sentiments are strongest among parents who do not know how to get school-related assistance from anyone other than the school guidance counselor, whom they may avoid because of the counselor's overwhelming caseload or because they do not want the counselor to know the limitations of their knowledge.

The basis for my beliefs came from previous professional and personal experiences. I had already met with parents at I.S. 227 earlier in the year, many of whom shared these types of concerns with me. To cite one such example, I attended a meeting at which parents, Queens College professors, I.S. 227 teachers, the principal, and I were present. Afterwards I had a conversation with two parents in response to their dissatisfaction with certain issues raised in the meeting. When I asked why they did not raise some of these issues in the meeting, the response was, "No way! They're the college professors, with degrees and everything. What do we know? We don't know all those big words they use, so we just keep quiet! I don't want to say something and sound stupid! Sometimes I wonder why I go to these meetings anyway, because I always leave them either frustrated because I didn't say anything or mad because I didn't tell them to speak simply so that normal people could understand what they're saying." This kind of experience at I.S. 227 reinforced my

conviction regarding the choice and design of parent activities. While our workshops were planned to provide specific skiils, I had hoped they would dispel certain fears or stumbling blocks that hindered the interplay between parents and their youngsters. The development of a parent's self-image is just as important to a child's life as it is to the parent's. Our role would be not only to provide certain information, but also to help parents recognize that *they do not have to have all the answers.*

These approaches to parents were perhaps the most important things we did in terms of contributing to later success. A rapport developed early on. Parents became a part of the decisionmaking and planning processes, and we, as program staff, were able to establish our basic program philosophy and display our enthusiastic willingness to cooperate. I mention these factors because, under other circumstances, some of these activities could have been the first in a series of setbacks. I say this because I often hear that our ability to do things ( and I mean just about anything) as an outside affiliate (the college) in a public school environment is not only unusual but it is possible only because this school is "special," or because we get "extras," or because of the court order, or because of other school characteristics that are seen as unique. Our ability to operate, however successfully or unsuccessfully, had less to do with the school being "special" than it had to do with our approach to carrying out activities.

We operated on the principle that, "In order to get a little you have to give a little." For example, when we needed to do something as simple as distribute our parent inventory forms during open-school week, we found this principle to be especially practical. We wanted to set up a table by the school's front entrance in order to greet the largest number of parents. This area, however, is designated for the PTA and its activities on open-school days. The PTA needs this set-up for the collection of dues and distribution of information. Even though our activities were also for parents, we had no right to assume that their agenda would necessarily be open to include ours. We found that by offering the PTA assistance (in terms of table coverage), they were willing to also let us share this space. Since the persons working at the PTA reception table were also parents of children in the school, they also wanted to see their child's teachers. To visit classrooms and operate the PTA table, parents had to rotate table coverage. This school, being no exception to the general rule, only had a few parents volunteering for this task, resulting in a situation of either limited table coverage or a limited amount of time for those parents to visit teachers. We, on the other hand, had no such demands on our time and were thus able to allow some extra time for these parents by offering table coverage. The PTA representatives warmly received our offer and appreciated our recognition and support of their needs.

## *WORKSHOP SESSIONS*

Registration for the first set of workshops began in December of 1980, with 189 parents signing up. On the basis of the number of registrants and their indicated preferred time, a calendar of workshops was distributed to parents that included the beginning schedule for January and additional information regarding late registration.

The first workshops were cooperatively led by Bill, Terry and myself. Even though we had money in our budget to hire outside presenters, Bill and I wanted to conduct at least the first few sessions ourselves because we knew they would be critical in terms of securing parent interest and involvement. We did not want to take any chances on their being disappointed and of losing their participation. In addition, our overall ability to run the program successfully depended heavily upon the involvement, mutual respect, and input of our parents, teachers, and community residents. This was an opportunity to get to know some of these people better and for them to get to know us. These workshops were enhanced by Terry's role as translator for Hispanic parents who might have otherwise stayed home. We were able to bring together people from a variety of neighborhoods, cultures, religions, ages and races. Since they came to these workshops with a common purpose, they found that, in many ways, they were more *alike* than different. In fact, the most constant and profound reaction of many parents who attended these workshops was that they realized for the first time that their worries, concerns, and needs were not unique.

The very first workshop that we gave was on a Saturday and started at 10 a.m. It was held the second week in January when there was snow still on the ground. Bill and I arrived at I.S. 227 early that morning, set up coffee and doughnuts and waited for parents to arrive. We were happy that they arrived slowly because it gave us an opportunity to introduce ourselves and also enabled the parents to look around the room and get comfortable. All 19 participants in the group were female, but that is probably the only thing that they had in common. They were quite different in age (27 to 53), race, marital status, cultural background, number and age of children and so on. The working women were involved in a variety of occupations, including a teacher (at another school), a few secretaries, a postal worker, a florist, a sales clerk, and a claims adjuster. In terms of racial and cultural mix, we had white, black, and Hispanic parents whose cultural orientation or geographical backgrounds included London, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Italy and Australia. We knew a little about each of their backgrounds because our first sessions began with a getting to know you exercise, each parent telling the group a bit about herself and her reasons for being there. The

scheduled topic was "Coping with Adolescence" but we found that the exercise was so interesting and enjoyable that we spent most of that session introducing ourselves, ending with an agreement to cover the planned topic the following week.

It turned out that each of the first weekly sessions became an orientation session. Each group had a character of its own. While most were mixed racially and culturally, they were not similar in other respects. For example, the Tuesday morning group was attended by mothers who were home during the day, either because they were not employed or worked at night. The one exception was a delightful gentleman who attended the Tuesday morning group with his wife. The couple's role was unique in that they were not only parents but also retired grandparents. They were raising their 11 year old grandson who is a student at I.S. 227.

The Wednesday evening group was the largest and the only one attended equally by men and women. We had some married couples, some unmarried couples living together, some single parents (mothers and fathers), and even a young man living with a woman who had a child from her first marriage. Participants came from all over. This was always the largest group and its size grew as time passed. The Saturday morning group wound up being cancelled because we found that the Saturday participants started to come with their spouses to the Wednesday evening workshop that they had heard so much about. The participants were varied in age, race and color, including an inter-racial couple. Surprisingly, even after the group had grown to a very large size ( as many as 32 people in one small room), everyone participated. The only change was that the sessions almost always ended late. They began at 7:00 p.m. and were scheduled to end at 9:00 p.m., but they seldom ended before 10:00 p.m. (This was possible only because of the cooperation of the school custodian. The school's opening permit did not extend beyond 9:30 p.m., but the custodian or some member of his staff would always give us that extra time, and on occasion might even join in the discussion.)

The Thursday afternoon session, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., was also entirely comprised of female parents. Each had a very strong personality and a great deal of energy. No one could come into the workshops and not feel the energy circulating around the room. Many of these mothers did not work outside the home and were among those who had a child attending the school but were *not* residents of the local community. This was an ideal workshop time because they could get together for lunch in the teachers' cafeteria before the session and, soon after it was over, would pick up their children right there at the school. This group was not as mixed culturally and racially as the others. Most of the participants were white, with a middle- to upper-middle-class background.

Although each of the groups approached subjects in their own way, topics were introduced by either Bill or myself. Some of these included: "Coping with Adolescents in the Modern World," "Communicating with Your Child," "Helping Your Child with Homework Assignments," "Discipline and Your Child," and "Drug Education." As we were approaching the topic of drug education, a number of issues were in question. First I wondered whether it might be more beneficial if these specialized subjects were presented by an expert in the field. Second, how well would they be received by our present parent group? And third, what would happen to the development of our other program components if Bill and I continued to devote so much time to these workshops? Bill and I agreed that it was time to consider some options. The workshops were taking up a considerable amount of time which meant that other program goals could not be achieved. A woman named Sue Fallon, who had just completed a packaged lesson series on parenting skills, was hired. If the parents received her as well as we had hoped, part of our problems would be solved. As for the other subject areas, we decided to sponsor one-shot workshops in selected content areas, in addition to scheduling the regular group sessions. We sponsored a workshop on drug education at which we had drug educators from District 17 come to I.S. 227. For the workshop on "Sex Education and Your Child" the presenter was from Planned Parenthood. For "Home Maintenance" the presenter was from the Cornell University Extension. And for "Helping Your Child with Homework Assignments," the presenter was a Queens College professor.

Not only did the groups accept our plan of action, but it seemed to work out exceptionally well. The one-shot workshops were superbly conducted by the presenters. They knew their subjects areas and brought with them numerous hand-outs and display materials. For example, the workshop presenters for drug education brought a seven-foot display with diagrams, drug samples, a smoking machine (to show the destructive effects smoking has on the lungs), a hands-on body chart showing how drugs, liquor and smoke affect parts of the body, and numerous hand-out pamphlets and articles.

Everyone was enthusiastic about these sessions. Not only did we find that our regular group of participants attended these workshops, but because of the added publicity (sending notices home with the children in the school, flyers, posting notices in local newsletters etc.) new people came to many of the sessions. For example, some might attend the home maintenance workshop, but not necessarily attend the one geared to helping with homework. Each of the groups, therefore, was populated quite differently. We were pleased with this differentiation since we knew

that we were bringing more and more new people (primarily from the community) into the school.

These one-shot workshops involved the participation of the teaching staff. For example, one of our health education teachers, Jim Jordan, attended two drug education workshops to see if he could pick up a few ideas for his class. He was so impressed that he asked if he could make arrangements for his class to attend. Even though he had a considerable amount of book information on the subject, Mr. Jordan thought that the flair of these presenters, and the many materials they had, would have an important added impact in the classroom. Upon raising this question to the students' parents they all supported the idea. This was not to deny the importance of parents' having this information but rather to suggest that children should also have it. One parent said: "Boy, am I glad that I came. I thought I knew just about all there was to know about drugs. I knew about marijuana, heroin, angel dust, and cocaine, but I had no real concept of what they do to the body. After attending this workshop I know that those drugs are only the tip of the iceberg in today's drug traffic. While I came to learn something that I could teach my three daughters, I am now aware of what to watch out for. I am glad that I will have some idea of what may or may not be happening to them if they do touch that dangerous stuff. I will be able to see the danger signs, but now I wish that somebody could teach my daughters the same thing that I was just taught so they won't be so tempted in the first place. If I try to tell them they won't believe me. Unfortunately, I know that they need to hear it from someone other than their mothers."

We initially arranged to have these presenters visit Mr. Jordan's 7th grade classes and cover some of the material presented in these workshops. Mr. Jordan invited other classes to join him on those days. This offering became so popular among the teachers, parents and students, that we started an ongoing series of workshops for all the health education classes at all grade levels. To extend this offering to the community, we also planned a parent-child night on this subject. This basically entailed a larger workshop presentation where parents brought their child or where a child invited his or her parent.

The other change was that the regularly scheduled workshops, which were now being led by Sue Fallon, were scheduled in conjunction with one-shot sessions so that parents would not have to choose one over the other. To continue our input in all of the prescribed sessions, Terry would assist Ms. Fallon, and/or any other guest leaders. (Although Bill and I would try to join all scheduled groups, Terry was always in attendance.) Once again Terry's input was valuable as an interpreter, but in these instances she was equally as important as an ongoing contact person for

our program. Terry was there to respond to any new interests or suggestions that others might have in regards to the program and to the workshop series.

As Ms. Fallon's sessions progressed we found that parental responses were mixed. Some of our regular participants enjoyed these sessions while others did not. Some parents very much liked, and in some cases even preferred, the structured type of lessons that she presented, while others were not as receptive. Even though the basic subject matter was the same in the workshops led by Ms. Fallon (parenting, discipline, communication skills), the presentation of information in these workshops, as opposed to those conducted by Bill and me, was more formal. Some of our former workshop participants chose not to continue in this series. They felt that the structured type of lesson was rigid because it did not allow for the participatory interaction they had previously enjoyed. The number of workshop participants decreased from about 100 regular participants to 75.

We examined the overall patterns of participation to determine which format would be the most attractive to the largest number of parents. Should it be informal rap sessions, the one-shot informational type workshops, or the structured lessons on parenting? To plan future activities most effectively it was important to apply what we had learned. A beginning step was to gather and evaluate parental responses to these workshops. Since each of these workshop "types" did not have the same participants, feedback sheets were designed to solicit responses to each type of session. These forms were printed in English and Spanish and given to the participating parents. If certain parents were no longer attending, these forms were mailed to their homes, with a stamped self-addressed return envelope. The questions were similar for each workshop series and, in addition to the option of choosing a rating between 1 to 5 (5 being the highest rating, and 1 the lowest), space was provided for individual comments.

The reactions were favorable. Somewhat surprising to us was the large number of parents who wrote comments. Some examples:

> By attending the parent workshop, I found that I was able to talk about the problems I have concerning my son, which I was never able to do before. The presenters and parents in the group all showed concern. They took time out to discuss my personal problems, which really helped me.
>
> I look forward every Wednesday night to going to the workshops. It helped me a great deal with understanding

and solving problems that I had with my son—problems I was not handling in the best way. I can honestly say that in the last month or so there is a big change in me and the way I handle my son. There is more communication between us again. The workshops helped me a great deal.

I have enjoyed the parent workshops and hope they will continue throughout the school year, and will ultimately expand throughout the entire school system.

We have learned a lot on how to cope with the modern child of today. The difference between discipline and punishment. We, as parents, sometimes get carried away and use punishment to discipline our child, and in many cases it does not work. We have learned a technique on how to listen, instead of giving advice all the time.

Besides this formal means of evaluation, we periodically received letters from parents. In many instances these were thank-you notes with personal indications of how they felt these workshops had helped them, or simply how much they enjoyed them.

My son, Josh, was admitted to the school for the 1981-82 school year. Josh is looking forward to entering this school as an exciting experience. Going to I.S. 227, however, means that he will be attending a school outside of his community without his neighborhood friends. The school also represents substantial new challenges and demands for a ten-year-old child. In my opinion, these changes should be quite beneficial to my child in the long run. In the short run, however, parent support and understanding are most important in helping a child make a healthy adjustment to this different type of educational environment. In my opinion, this parent involvement approach is truly a credit to Queens College. Both my wife and I plan to continue to attend these sessions throughout the school year.

I attended four of the five workshops. They were very interesting and informative. It is good to discuss problems that occur every day at your home and to know that you are not alone with a specific problem. We can get ideas from each other. Also, those "specialists" that you had come were exceptionally informative. The top-

ics were good and I hope that they continue being held. I will surely be there!

I enjoyed the parent workshops tremendously! I found that most everyone participated and that my problems were very much the same as other people's. Everyone was very friendly and encouraging. The special programs were very informative. The Drug program should also be given to the students though. The homework special was just great and even more informative. I am looking forward to more of the same.

Thank you for the excellent presentation that you sponsored on Alcohol and Drug abuse on Tuesday, January 20, 1981. Carl's speech was very enlightening. It answered a lot of questions we as parents should be asking or getting information about. I'm sure that the majority of the group did not know the effects of drugs on the body. I know that I sure didn't. Please keep up the good work. I'm sure that you will also be able to get this important message to a lot of the children either through us, the parents, or in indirect presentations to them. Please let me know when your next session is.

I enjoyed the program so very much. I feel that all of the presenters were informative. The people in each group were very friendly and I found myself looking forward to coming every week. I have found that each of us has the same type of problem with raising our kids and the same worries. The drug workshop was excellent. I found it to be so good. I even took notes. I wish that I could be a fly on the wall when that man talks to the kids. The workshop on discipline was fun. It's nice to know that I am not the only one who screams at the kids and to find out that in most ways I am not too bad. Homework was interesting, too. I found that I should not ask my child if he has homework [this parent was referring to the lesson-teaching your child responsibility]. I'll see how that works out. Bill, Johanna and Terry were very cooperative and a pleasure to be with. I can't wait for the next group of workshops to start.

On the basis of these unsolicited letters and the formal feedback we concluded that there was a need and audience for all three types of workshops, the one-shot sessions, the parenting instruction type of

workshop and the informal rap sessions on parenting issues. Although we would not be able to implement such a plan before the next year, we did want to make immediate use of this information as we planned our parent activities for the next year.

## *THE CAUMSETT CONFERENCE*

We had a little money remaining in our budget. I asked whether it might not be possible to have an all-day parent conference. Just as professionals in education have a conference for their professional development, I wanted the same type of thing for parents. Since we acknowledge the significant role that parents play in the overall education of their children, it could only be beneficial if parents and educators worked more constructively together. Why continue to sponsor developmental activities separately? Why not, instead, have a similar type of professional conference that focuses on the concerns of our parents, teachers, and the larger community? In a time of declining enrollment and limited dollars, the benefits of such a conference, if helpful in developing relationships among groups, would definitely outweigh the costs of its sponsorship.

I requested that this money be transferred into our parenting category for the proposed conference and upon receipt of Washington's approval, the preparation began. Although the actual amount of money we had to spend was minimal for an activity of this type, we did not want participants to have to pay a fee. It was essential to have a good level of participation and we did not want a fee to deter attendance.

A suitable attractive site for the conference had to be found. It also had to be affordable. Caumsett, a center leased by Queens College for its environmental teaching and research, was looked into. This center is a mansion located near the edge of Long Island Sound at Lloyd Harbor in Huntington. It was designed and built in 1924 for Marshall Field III and was one of the largest 'working' country estates on Long Island. Originally having 110 rooms, and later reduced to 64, the mansion is listed in the National Historic Register. This center would surely provide a uniquely attractive atmosphere for such a conference. Because of its affiliation with the college, we were able to make arrangements at minimal cost.

After putting together a tentative plan for this one-day conference (in terms of potential presenters and speakers, possible workshop topics, necessary travel arrangements, food service and so on), I formulated a pre-registration packet for participants. To stimulate as much initial interest as possible, this pre-registration material was attractively packaged. It included a picture brochure of the Caumsett facility, a tentative

outline of the program, and a pre-registration form. In addition to asking the basic type of registration information, our form also included a second part which requested feedback for program planning. Possible workshop topics were listed and applicants were asked to indicate which topics interested them. Fifteen workshop possibilities, with brief descriptions, were listed for the final selection of twelve workshops. Six were to be held in the morning and six in the afternoon.

After these pre-registration packets were completed, an introduction to the planned conferences was given at the general PTA meeting, at the school's teacher faculty conference, and at a variety of our community related activities. While most thought that it was a good idea, others expressed certain reservations. For example, some felt that an all day conference (which would run from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) was just too long; others did not want to give up a Saturday for such an activity; some did not like the idea of having to go so far and wondered why I didn't make it more convenient by holding it in either the school or at the college; others did not like the idea of having to travel out to Caumsett by bus; and so on.

Although I knew that many of the concerns were valid, I stood by my original premise that if this conference were to be held in a truly professional manner, it had to take all day; that if it were to be sponsored in an attractive fashion, it should not be held in the school cafeteria; and if we were to ensure everyone's timely arrival (anticipating the problem with parking, getting lost, people arriving sporadically), the chartered buses were a practical option.

We planned to host a conference for 100 people in April, 1981, but we would cancel our plans if we did not receive at least 50 registrants by the first week in March. In addition to the announcements, a number of other means were attempted to recruit participants. I visited several local community agencies to advise them of the upcoming conference. Though somewhat time-consuming, this was important because it displayed our sincere interest in their attending. Some parents from the community who did not have a child attending I.S. 227 were, at first, reluctant to register because they felt that they might feel out of place or that the planned activities would not apply to them. These views were discussed and satisfactorily explained.

Each agency was given three to seven pre-registration packets to distribute. To complement these publicity efforts, letters of invitation were sent out to various people at the college and other nearby public schools. Most important of all, I sought to involve a number of people who ordinarily would be participants to now be part of the conference's sponsorship. Before the first week in March, we passed our minimum of

50 registrants, and began to explore the option of expanding our registration to more than 100 people.

What was most encouraging was the number of people who offered their help. Since we did not have a large staff or a lot of money to spend, these offers were readily taken up. Flavia Lourdes, one of the parents who participated in our workshops, used to own a florist shop. She volunteered to purchase flowers for us wholesale and personally design a centerpiece for each of the conference tables, corsages for all the female presenters and carnations for the men. Sue Kasten, Pauline Paccione, Eileen Byrnes, Edith Joseph, Beatrice Stampfli, and Jackie Tellish were among the parents who offered and delivered their full-time assistance on the day of the conference. Some people thought it unlikely that teachers would give up a Saturday for this kind of activity (especially with no compensation in time or money), but they did. Assistance ranged from being a workshop presenter to coming out to Long Island to help carry equipment. The video equipment we needed, for example, was not something we were able to get from the school or the college. Not having enough money to rent such items, we would have done without if Jeff Aubry, Director of Elmcor Youth Services Agency (one of the community agencies with which we work cooperatively), had not generously arranged for us to use his equipment. We received assistance from people as busy as the Assistant Principal of I.S. 227 (Bernard Alfant), Myra Gerstman (an art teacher at I.S. 227), Barry Wiesenfeld (administrator at I.S. 227), and Jean Carter, an administrative assistant at York College who came out to Caumsett the night before to help with all of the necessary last-minute arrangements. Other teachers came out that day, some with their wives or husbands. Home economics teacher Lila Gordon, I.S. 227 program administrator Kenneth Greenberg, and Dr. Joan Silverstein (Queens College) came, participated, and helped out.

Individuals from the instructional and administrative staff of both the college and the Louis Armstrong Middle School (I.S. 227) gave workshop sessions. Cecil King, a physical education teacher at I.S. 227, led a workshop on the subject of fathers becoming more involved in the education of their children. Anthony Sanfilippo, former Principal of I.S. 227, Dr. Clarence Bunch, Chairman of Secondary Education at Queens College, Barry Wiesenfeld, school administrator at I.S. 227, and Edith Joseph, former PTA co-president, led a workshop that focused on the accomplishments and future directions of I.S. 227, entitled "I.S. 227: Where Do We Go From Here?" Dr. Rachel Weddington, Professor of Education at Queens College, led a workshop on the relationship of specific tasks to the development of constructive behavior, entitled "Parents' Relationships to School Assignments." The other conference

presenters and speakers were invited from the larger metropolitan area and, again, we had an overwhelmingly positive response. The following workshops also became a part of our final program:

- When I Was a Kid . . . Perceptions on Growing Up
- Long Range Educational and Career Planning Techniques for Adults
- An Attitude on Positive Alternatives to Suspension and Discipline
- Careers . . . How Do Your Children Learn About the World of Work?
- Child Advocacy . . . Making Parents Educational Partners With the School.
- Single Parent Families . . . Challenges and Opportunities.
- Parents as Primary "Sexuality" Educators of Their Children.

After the conference I was asked: Why did the parents come? How did you get so many teachers to come? Why were people willing to come from areas considerably far away? I do not know the answers to these questions, but I do have a certain sense about them. I believe that people came because they were coming to *their* conference, something they put together and carried out. Each and every individual had one special talent, idea, or skill to contribute to the day. Parents came with the most cooperative attitudes I had seen in a long time. Upon arrival there was the traditional opening session with coffee and cake. Participants were given conference packets which had the conference theme, "Parents Make a Difference," imprinted on them with a program, note pad, and hand-out literature. Each parent participated in one workshop in the morning and one after lunch. The food was exceptionally good and the setting was truly a lovely one. All of these factors combined to allow people of different races and cultures, and parents who had or did not have children at I.S. 227, to talk to each other in spirited ways.

In a sense we were victims of success because we were bombarded with requests to have more conferences, regardless of where or when. Aside from the sense of community that was engendered, the most obvious outcome was that, in the eyes of the community, we were a community school trying to be responsive to constituencies within and without the school. The Caumsett Conference took a lot of preparation, a lot of

knowing the 'territory,' and a lot of give and take. But it paid off. It was worth emphasizing that the conference was immeasurably aided by the time, interest and energy volunteered by the teaching and administrative staffs of I.S. 227. We demonstrated that the community wanted to be a part of the action and so did teachers and administrators.

The workshops and the conference are representative examples of our way of thinking, our approach and outcomes. A lot more goes on in the community resource room. As someone said, "This room is like a mini-Grand Central Station." In addition to being the location of parent workshops and community/school forums (as cited in Bill Fibkins' chapter), it became the central location for all outreach activities—activities involving teachers, parents, senior citizens, and youngsters in community service projects such as the development of a wall mural painted on the outside of the school by local youngsters and I.S. 227 students in the summer months; a holiday greetings project that involved caroling and the making of holiday cards for residents of a community-based state institution for the mentally retarded; the development of a course series that involved the sponsorship of daytime enrichment course offerings (Political Science, English Literature, Conversational Spanish, and Dancercize) at I.S. 227 for senior citizens and a project involving an I.S. 227 teacher, Alice LoSordo, who took a group of racially mixed students to a local Head Start center to read to pre-school youngsters. Some of the participating students, who were originally reading below grade level and appeared to be unmotivated, now look forward to this weekly walk through the community and to the excitement and satisfaction they receive in reading to these attentive young children. Beyond the obvious benefit of these older youngsters acting as role models, the opportunity to be listened to and admired has helped I.S. 227 students to improve their reading ability and has stimulated their overall interest in reading.

Even though the level of activity is no measure of effectiveness, I have tried to indicate that there is a basis for the conclusion that if we did not accomplish all of our goals, our efforts had outcomes relevant to our purposes. We played a part in giving the geographical community a psychological sense of community. Finally, if we learned anything, it is that you cannot be passive. You have to act, take risks, and always remind yourself that, without constituencies who not only feel part of the action but willingly share responsibility for planning and implementing, you end up nowhere, and alone.

# CHAPTER 8

# *Epilogue*

## Paul Longo

In the opening chapter of this book, Seymour Sarason writes of his initial concerns about President Saul Cohen's efforts to involve Queens College in a cooperative venture with the public schools. He alludes to the poor history of such efforts, the many failures, and the university's limited understanding of the difficulties involved. He reviews his initial reservations about Queens engaging in such a project and his fears that it would fail. What followed, to his surprise, and I am sure to that of others involved in the project, is described in the rest of this book. It is a story that includes numerous successes—areas in which professionally exciting and important things were accomplished. An available school site was found, college and public school staff were able to cooperate successfully, and a rich environment was created for students. The project has continued to grow and a large number of those involved have evidenced strong feelings about the results.

In the wake of this success, the college decided to expand the effort. It developed an affiliation with a second school, both to replicate some of what had been accomplished at I.S. 227 and, if possible, to break further new ground. This chapter will report on the initial stages of that new effort. In a sense, we have come full cycle and this book now concludes with a chapter on new beginnings.

In initiating this new effort we have also come full cycle on Seymour Sarason's initial concern, that of the prospect of failure, the fear of rushing in where angels fear to tread. The second effort differs from the first in a number of important respects, and because of that its success was by no means assured. This new effort required us to face more fully the traditional blockages that have existed in the working relationship of a college and a public school due to differences in their institutional structure and purposes. It is in that sense an extension of the challenge we have been facing.

Opening I.S. 227 was difficult in a distinctive way. It presented a unique set of challenges as well as opportunities. The project leadership was faced with the problem of hiring staff, filling key administrative and supervisory positions, and obtaining resources. Because everything was started from scratch, those involved had to face many problems all at once. Practically nothing was in place and the entire school organization had to be created with no reference to any prior building history, for there was none. While a previous history for a formal organization presents formidable obstacles to those attempting to develop a new structure, so does its absence. Developing a cohesive working unit out of strangers placed in a new environment can make great demands upon leadership.

Unlike I.S. 227, the second school was not a new building nor was it unstaffed. P.S. 71, which resides in District 24 in the borough of Queens, was a fully operating elementary school having nine hundred pupils in kindergarten through sixth grade. The school has a large immigrant population, consisting of Italians, Yugoslavians, and Romanians with some blacks and Hispanics as well. It is located in a working-class neighborhood. Originally built in 1894, the school had a new wing added to it in 1913. It is thus not only an older physical plant, but also a building with a full and complete history of its own. It is an ongoing operation with a staff of experienced teachers, many of whom have been there for a number of years. Such an organization has its own traditions and its own ways of operating. Into this history, this set of functioning staff and organizational relationships, the college must now attempt to smoothly insert its own staff and another set of organizational goals—no mean feat.

The questions remain, as always: Can it be done? And if so, with what results? How aware of the potential problems will the cooperating parties be and how has the college's previous experience with I.S. 227 helped or hindered its preparation? The answer to many of these questions will require time and perhaps another book. At this juncture, what can be done is to point to some of the initial successes and failures, hoping that these can provide both some continuity and contrast with the I.S. 227 experience.

## *A BRIEF HISTORY*

The decision to expand the Queens College collaboration to another school was informally reached in the early part of 1979, not long after the I.S. 227 affiliation had begun. Some initial exploratory efforts were made and then dropped, though the intent of working with another school remained firm.

In the spring of 1981, the process began anew with District 24. Discussions ensued and some preliminary agreements were made, though no final decisions regarding the site, staffing, or financial arrangements were reached. It was late in the summer of 1981 before a final accord was reached between the college, the school district, and the Board of Education. By then, it had become difficult for the college to select appropriate personnel and make staffing arrangements for that fall. The college, including all its decisionmaking apparatus (particularly at departmental levels), is closely tied to the cycles of its academic year. During the summer, most staff members are hard to reach. The result was that, though the school site had been chosen, a decision was made to postpone the initiation of the project until the beginning of the second semester of the 1981-82 school year. For the college, that meant early February. The decision was fortuitous; the timing, however, was not.

While perhaps obvious, it is important to note that the choice of when to begin revolved around the timing of events rather than any carefully planned estimate of the needs of the project. Few of us would have considered mid-year an optimum time to begin. There were some advantages. The school staff could be prepared in advance for the affiliation with the college rather than returning in the fall to face not only the opening of a new school year but the surprise of an unanticipated partnership. The college staff also had the luxury, if we chose to take advantage of it, of using the semester to make an informal needs assessment that could inform our choice of personnel and enhance our preparation for making an effective beginning in February.

The disadvantages were obvious. Entering a school late in the second semester, when working relationships have been set and a distinctive pattern of operation established, greatly added to the risk of our being seen as intrusive, as an unwelcome encumbrance. That danger, always a factor when an outside agent is introduced into an ongoing organization, is only exacerbated when the timing of the entrance is so inopportune. Optimum conditions for beginning would have given us time to meet and talk with the school staff late in the second semester in anticipation of initiating our involvement in the fall of the next year. Then again, such projects rarely have the advantage of optimum conditions.

As it turned out, the college did not use the first semester to accomplish the hoped-for planning. Operationalizing the project required the cooperation of three separate (and organizationally distinct) entities: Queens College, the New York City Board of Education, and the board of administrative personnel of District 24. While there was an agreement of intent from the beginning, the actual mechanics of bringing that agreement to the point of action required the entire semester. Each group

had a set of conditions that had to be met prior to its participation. While the specific conditions were agreed on, coordinating when and how they would be met consumed months as agreements were fed through the bureaucratic decisionmaking apparatus of each organization. It was mid-January before final arrangements were completed.

One notes these cycles of events not out of any masochistic tendencies but to inform other intrepid travelers, intent on making a similar journey, of what is involved so they might be better prepared for the unexpected and often unwelcome work of "getting ready." The more complex or organizationally disparate the cooperating institutions are (or the greater number of them involved), the more time-consuming and frustrating the process can become.

## *ENTERING THE SCHOOL*

Of any of the groups immediately involved in the project, the teachers at P.S. 71 were probably the least informed about the timing and the overall purpose of the venture. Because such collaborations are generally planned by the administrative representatives of the different institutions, the greatest amount of information and the clearest understanding of the agreements reached are found at this level. Unfortunately, the actual plan is usually executed by and with individuals not closely involved in the initial planning.

Thus, it is natural that when college staff enter the school acceptance comes most of all from the administrative staff. It is also natural that ventures of this type are often resisted and resented by teachers. They have generally been the least involved in the planning, the least consulted about program purpose, and are usually the most poorly informed about all aspects of what is being attempted. (What will eventually be expected of them is often in sharp contrast to their initial exclusion, for many of these efforts require their active involvement.) That their initial response to such programs is often negative should not be unexpected. The teachers of P.S. 71 were no exception to this rule.

We at the college had not developed a sound plan for overcoming this seemingly normal pattern of events. The initial planning had been done at administrative levels and teachers were not informed until late January, when college officials made a presentation to the building staff at a faculty meeting. The teachers were wary and very tentative about their involvement. They saw the college staff as an arm of the administration, and in a sense that was quite so. We were certainly in the building at their behest. While the teachers might concede the benefits of such an arrangement for the administration, perhaps even broadly for the school program, they

saw far less of direct benefit to themselves in their work in the classroom. Thus their concern with what might be required of them was not immediately balanced by any sense that our presence would enhance their efforts.

Few projects have the luxury of time in which to plan initial activities properly. Most move from a stage where energies are thoroughly consumed in efforts to have the project accepted to one in which that battle is won but the program must begin immediately. Little time is left for planning a smooth entrance. In this we were no different from many other projects.

Too close identification with the building administration is not easily avoided. For this project to work, it absolutely required the cooperation of the building principal and supervisory staff. Their resistance or even their half-hearted support would simply frustrate most efforts. However, it cannot be doubted that this very cooperation may also engender a measure of staff distrust. The administration is responsible for rating teachers and for making many decisions that will benefit some and deprive others. Any attempt to tie into such a complex set of relationships, while necessary, is fraught with many difficulties. If the ultimate goal is to influence behavior in the classroom, that highly private preserve of teachers, one must establish a relationship that is free of any taint of reporting to the administration. To do less is to reduce the candor of teachers and therefore shrink the prospect of making an impact. Thus, while it is necessary to work closely with the administration to fulfill one part of the function, it is also important to maintain enough of a separate identity to allow other equally important functions to be performed. While recognizing mutually contradictory elements, it was clear my role required me to work cooperatively with both groups. The key to success will lie in our capacity to harmonize the demands of separate functions so that the common goal of improving instruction can be attained.

## *MEETING THE STAFF*

I met the principal, Bernie Daly, and the assistant principal, Doris Theiler, of the school on my first visit to the building in early February. Both had been highly recommended to me by colleagues who had conducted the initial negotiations with the district and I found them to be as open and cooperative as described. I spent several days conferring with the administration, trying to obtain as much information about the building and personnel as I could. The intent was to avoid casual mistakes based on ignorance of the way the school functions, its special traditions, or the sensibilities of the staff. The process is one that both expands and

limits your understanding; expanding it by the insights offered, but limiting it by the perception of people and events that are put forward. On the whole, it seems better to know, but it must be admitted that views of what are possible are seriously colored by these initial exchanges.

Since I had not been part of that earlier meeting the college had held with the staff at P.S. 71, it was decided that I should meet with them at the next faculty conference. Bernie Daly introduced me and I made a brief presentation. My intent was to be low key. I wanted to be careful not to overstate the possibilities of our collaboration and, most important, avoid giving any impression that I saw myself as some expert sent to solve their problems.

I would have to characterize staff reaction to my brief talk as being rather unenthusiastic. It was clear that most entertained some considerable doubt that any real help would be offered. These were veteran teachers who have heard many promises and suffered numerous disappointments. They were not well informed about our purpose and were not prepared to extend a casual acceptance of our presence. At best, the staff seemed prepared to take a wait-and-see attitude. There would be no rush to participate nor any immediate release of anyone's sense of expectation. It is a difficult attitude to contend with because there can be a quality of coldness to it, but given that prior experience of most teachers with such visions for improving education, it is probably fair and perhaps even a wise response on their part.

It was clear that the staff was not impressed with our being from the college, nor with the fact that others might come. On the contrary, we were probably somewhat more suspect. It is from this very quarter that some of the most disparaging criticism of the schools has come. Nor did the fact that we were from the education department help. Most were trained as undergraduates and later as graduates in such departments, where a critical or condescending attitude toward the efforts of teachers was a very common experience. Most classroom teachers feel that few of their instructors could do any better. I suspect they are right.

As Seymour Sarason has noted, the schools have a culture of their own. The New York City schools exhibit a specialized form of this culture, which takes on some aspects of the broader culture but contains a particular view that reflects the environment in which these schools reside. To most New York City teachers, if you have not been in the classroom *recently* (and at length, not at leisure) you cannot possibly know much about them and your opinions are not to be taken seriously. Despite titles, status, degrees earned, or presumed expertise, most teachers reflect an attitude that considers such experts to be naive neophytes in regard to conditions in the urban classroom.

To the New York City school teacher, even being an experienced teacher is not nearly enough. *Where* you have taught is critical. To have developed truly useful insights the experience must be *in* New York City, and not in a silk stocking area either. Anything short of this is not the "real world."

Perhaps this is an overstatement of the culture's major premise but it approximates the truth as most veteran teachers in the city system seem to understand it. Thus, to the normal resistance of outside influence exhibited by any large bureaucratic organization, is added the specialized ambivalence toward college personnel in general, education professors in particular, and non-New York City teachers as a whole. If you are inside the system, you accept this general view as the truth. The end result is an attitude that says if you have not been in the schools recently, you do not know much about them. It is not a view calculated to welcome outsiders.

In any event, my opening talk to staff elicted few cheers. The staff was controlled, distant, and while cordial, remained cautious. My status did not change perceptibly for many weeks. During that time, I felt that a few classrooms or teachers were open to a visit, but that the tendency was to drive me into an even deeper collaboration with administrators and further away from teachers. For me the staff divided into three basic groups. There were those who appeared deliberately cold and distant, seemingly signaling that they did not want to be involved and should not be approached. There were those who evidenced no interest. They were not particularly cold nor distant, they simply registered on the outside the apparent internal decision that there was less here than meets the eye. They just did not expect anything much to come of our being there. The third group appeared more interested and this was reflected in their being more approachable.

To this complicated set of relationships and attempts to read the responses of individuals, the visitor brings his own biases and predispositions. Some teachers were more approachable than I had assumed. It turned out it may have been I, more than they, who was wary. Some had the reputation of being difficult or less capable and I found myself unconsciously shying away from them. Perhaps this wariness was necessary. The position of a person trying to initiate a project about which staff has some intense reservations is extremely delicate. You cannot afford a mistake in the early stages since it could well compromise all subsequent efforts. It may thus be prudent to limit initial contact to those people who really desire to be involved and whose behavior, attitude, or intent seems to offer the greatest prospect of developing a successful collaboration. At the time this seemed the most appropriate strategy and the resulting experience still leads me to believe it is the wiser course.

## *THE INITIAL APPROACH*

Aside from Susan Turkel, who was supervising the six student teachers we had placed in the building, I was the sole college representative in the building from February through mid-March. During the first month I thought often of that first faculty conference; I felt I had been too low key and had lost a golden opportunity to generate interest. For several weeks I had nowhere in particular to go in the building and was concerned about how I would re-establish contact with staff and chart a direction. I am still not completely sure whether my deliberately understated approach served me ill or well. It may have allowed the staff time to adjust to my presence without feeling threatened or put upon. They may have been better served by not being faced with early decisions, very specific in nature, that would have forced choices about the level of cooperation individuals were willing to offer. Most took a wait-and-see attitude that probably, in the end, served all of us best.

Early in March I sent a note to teachers suggesting at least a dozen areas in which we might be able to provide either human or material resources. I got one response and it dealt with a very minor matter. This type of muted response was an expected result of the approach we were using. We had chosen to patiently try making individual contacts, slowly convincing some key staff members that the college had something to offer.

My initial contacts with those staff members whom I did feel were positively disposed were generally pleasant. Some rapport was established. We were also extremely fortunate in that our group of student teachers was capable, responsible, and quite professional in their conduct. They had not been specially selected, but their own personal attributes and the staff's appreciation of their presence (they had not had student teachers in P.S. 71 for six years) combined to allow this part of our effort to be quite successful. Often a great deal depends on such lightly planned and loosely controlled elements. All we had been able to do in the haste with which we entered the school was to screen out one obviously unsuited student teacher. Yet, in the initial stages these students turned out to be the most visible and frequently read sign of our presence. We worked hard to impress on them the importance of their role, but much of the success was due to the fact that they were so solid as a group. As we found out when the second group of student teachers arrived, it is an easy matter for real problems to arise from this source. By then, fortunately, the college staff had become a little more independently established. This allowed us to be treated as individuals and we were not corporately blamed for errors made by student teachers over which we may have had little or no control.

At the same time, I made contact with a few teachers about bringing in a college staff member, Jim Higgins, who would work directly with students one day a week in the area of children's literature. Jim's great mastery of a wide range of literature and his unusual rapport with children made this venture a singular success. Into the teeth of the stereotype of the college professor, Jim brought an exuberance and a love for the written word that was infectious. It was easy to expand the number of classes he visited and, as word got around among the teachers, I soon found it difficult to meet the number of requests for his visits to classrooms. We developed an alternating schedule for him so that every other week he visited the same classes, and in May we arranged a whole new schedule of classes. Jim's work added immeasurably to the gradual acceptance of our presence.

During this time, Dr. Susan Turkel and I were also offering teachers any help we could in a variety of areas. We frequently were able to provide materials, though we were not yet invited into classes to work directly with children. My energies at this time were mainly taken up in other areas. We had been able to offer some help in the form of efforts by the student teachers, Jim Higgins, and Susan. I wanted to effect a more visible sign of our presence, one that implicitly and clearly stated our intention to make a long-term contribution to the school's educational program. What we had offered thus far could quickly be removed. It established no sign of our long-range intent and it did not have the broad visibility I was seeking.

Having learned within the first week that a dozen or more teachers had taken courses in computers, I soon began to focus on the development of a computer center as a project that could utilize staff skills, make the desired contribution to the educational program, and meet the condition which I had set for us to establish a more permanent physical presence. I spoke to Dean John Lidstone who agreed to contribute $2,500 of the School of Education's funds so I could go to the school district and other community agencies and ask for matching funds to build a computer center. I visited banks in the area of P.S. 71 and got some encouraging responses. This allowed me to initiate the process for purchasing computers. The district offered its full support. Eventually we were able to buy the necessary hardware with funds from the district and money designated from the Board of Education to the college and the project. Further funding was provided. At a school faculty meeting in late March, I was able to tell the staff we would be able to create a computer center, a well-equipped art room, and a photography room. One of the new student teachers, present at the meeting, later commented to me that she was surprised at the lack of enthusiasm in the staff's response. She pointed out that she would have been quite excited about the prospect but did not

sense that level of excitement in the staff's response. For myself, however, I was pleased. She had not seen the reaction at the first meeting in February. I knew there was a difference. While there was no overt demonstration of enthusiasm, it was clear that interest was there. The wall of disbelief I had sensed at the first meeting was far less pronounced at this one. Without disturbing the entire building and without having made effusive claims or promises, we were delivering some things of educational value. The difference in the way this announcement was received may have been slight, but it was there. The direction was positive and a small momentum had been established. It needed to be carefully nurtured.

## *A FIRST MISTAKE*

Within a month of the time that we had initiated the project at P.S. 71, an opportunity to obtain some additional outside funding presented itself. Thinking that obtaining such funds would allow the college to organize some aspects of our overall program that would be highly beneficial, we put together a proposal to apply for the funding. It seemed clear to the college leadership that this was an excellent opportunity, consisting only of benefits with no visible drawbacks. We could use the funds to finance some needed activities such as an early morning and after school program, a senior citizens' center, and some adult education courses.

It soon became apparent that there were some drawbacks. The funding source was generally prepared to entertain only one proposal from a district. District 24 had already submitted one. If the college submitted another, we would be in competition with the District's own proposal since both were benefitting the same general population. Second, we were quite late. By the time I was informed, we had barely ten days to complete a proposal and obtain widespread agreement to support it from a number of community agencies. I also felt we were establishing a direction in the school and did not want to divert energies to what seemed a less important matter at this stage of our development. In discussions with Sid Trubowitz I stated my reservations. At a later meeting with other college officials, we presented the potential drawbacks of having too little time and being in competition with the district. Our reservations were not considered substantive and the decision was made to apply for the funding.

Obtaining an extension, I eventually put together a proposal. The funding source required the cooperation and involvement of a number of community agencies, including the local planning board and representatives of other service agencies. A task force with key representatives from

these agencies had to be formed. All this was done, but it was done in haste and in great ignorance of the historical relationships and antipathies between a number of groups in the district. By the time the proposal got to the Board of Education, both our haste and our ignorance were quickly exposed. As well-intentioned as we may have been, we had acted precipitously. After weeks of exercising prudence and care in a small arena like P.S. 71, we had suddenly risked all that had been assiduously built up by rather heedlessly jumping into the larger arena of the school district. The result should not have been unexpected. In our haste we made "small" errors like including a whole design for a senior citizens' center that would be in direct competition with one run by a member of the Board of Education. He had not been asked to be on the task force nor had we consulted with him. Indeed, the language used to justify our need for a senior citizens' center could not have been better calculated to offend him, stating as it did the extreme lack of such services in the community. Our task force also included some individuals representing factions that were anathemas to members of the Board. So much for the contention that ignorance is bliss.

Such errors, as innocent as they may seem, can have very broad repercussions. Boards of Education in New York City are increasingly political in their behavior. District 24 was by no means an exception to this. Even sound educational efforts can be frustrated by running afoul of the political arrangements and trade-offs that exist within the district. Care must be taken to avoid fanning the rivalries and jealousies that exist between contending factions or even the best program can be summarily brought to a conclusion. The experience at I.S. 227 had not really prepared us for the depth of such rivalries which extended to concerns that one building in the district was benefitting unequally, even though it was at no one else's financial or professional expense. (I.S. 227 was unique in that it was not part of a community school district which avoided competition with other schools.) We saw the benefits eventually overlapping into other schools in the district. Others saw only that P.S. 71 was obtaining aid and services they were not now receiving. Viewed from the latter perspective, political rather than educational decisions are often what result. Most Board members are part of this process of rivalry; indeed, they see themselves as elected to maintain their constituency's stake in it and not ameliorate or resist its destructive effects. For those trying to develop programs it is yet another source of resistance with which they must contend.

The response of the Board to the proposal placed Anthony Sanfilippo in an extremely awkward position. Not satisfied to simply reject the proposal, some Board members used it to raise questions about the role

of the superintendent and others in a way that had obvious implications for future policy. Not wanting to be caught up (even indirectly) in these internal issues, Bernie Daly, the principal of P.S. 71, and I met with two of the Board members and Anthony. We later asked him to withdraw the proposal. He felt he could not. Once initiated, other issues were at stake and he now needed guidelines about how such proposals would be treated in the future. The final results were less drastic than they might have been. In our conversations with Board members, who were concerned about the political origins of the proposal and the college's potential role in all of it, I think we were able to convince them that we were ignorant rather than malicious—a trade-off that held no great advantage. The affair caused no great damage, but only a complete innocent would not recognize that such incidents reduce one's margin of error for the future. It caused us to needlessly squander our energies, and perhaps some of our credibility, although it had little impact at P.S. 71, where most of the activity initiated earlier continued unimpeded.

Trying to establish cooperation between disparate institutions is fraught with such perils. The possibilities for error and misunderstanding are constantly present and those who are removed from the scene do not always learn from them. Because they are insulated from the tense period in which one fears the project may be irreparably damaged, when nothing dramatic results it is easy to conclude that no real danger ever existed. Thus, the future behavior of the college community as a whole may be not better informed by such occurrences. It is difficult to pass on such experience. Those operating within the school site may miss things, but of necessity develop some sensitivity to how the institution operates and the types of activities or behavior it will accommodate. Such insight is useful in guiding day-to-day activities in the school. The problem is that it is not as potent a factor in influencing major decisions about direction, which are frequently made apart from the school and the personnel who work there. Both the substance of those decisions and the timing of their implementation are too often made apart from the people who will be most directly influenced, particularly the teachers. Reconciling and coordinating these levels of decisionmaking and balancing the different sources of input remain major challenges for projects such as this.

## *EXPANDING THE PROJECT*

By the end of the first semester (June 1981), a growing rapport had been developed with the staff at the school. A clear outline for future activities had been developed and it was obvious that some rich possibilities existed. Some additional planning and consultation was done over the

summer in preparation for the new year. By the time we returned in the fall, a number of important things were beginning to fall into place. The resources that the college was prepared to offer had expanded to include:

- Six student teachers, on-site, five days a week;
- Five graduate interns, fully licensed as teachers, available three days per week; and
- Six college staff, one full-time, five assigned part time to the school.

By the fall the climate at the school had greatly changed and project staff, interns as well as faculty, were very cordially received by teachers in the building. At the first faculty meeting we were able to announce some of the activities we would be engaged in. The computer center was complete and Susan Turkel would be conducting a course for graduate workshop credit, on-site, for teachers in the building. Twenty-two members of the faculty took the course. During the day the center would be used by students, with lunch hour use reserved for staff. The interns provided by the college would aid in instruction, as well as conduct early morning and after school programs in the center for children. Through the Early Bird program, based on the model developed at I.S. 227, we were able to offer children programs that included computers, magic, sewing, use of microscopes, cooking, basketball, and gymnastics. We also opened and staffed with our interns an art room that was fully equipped and well supplied. The project had also supplied a typing room with thirty-five new typewriters and a math-science center staffed by two of our interns. Another intern worked with special education classes in the building since this was her graduate specialization. The fifth intern worked in Reading/Language Arts, and was able to offer some follow-up to the work Jim Higgins was doing in the school.

Besides Jim and Susan Turkel, we had added Johanna Mott, an Early Childhood specialist, and Armand Thibodeau, whose field is reading, to the college staff working in the building. Frank Riessman (mentoring and peer tutoring) and Richard Lewis (poetry) continued their activity from the latter part of the previous year.

In brief, our second semester initiated a series of activities with excellent long-range promise. Since our commitment in this school is both less intensive and intended to be of shorter duration than that at I.S. 227, the challenge that faces us is to both continue to develop the total program successfully as well as the means to transfer the conduct of major portions of it to the regular staff of P.S. 71.

## *SUMMARY*

Collaborations such as those under way at I.S. 227 and P.S. 71 have great potential usefulness for the field of education. They address the scandalous separation of theory and practice that has characterized most teacher-training programs from their very inception. There are, however, numerous obstacles to the development of a smooth collaborative arrangement between the university and the public schools. The institutions are highly disparate in regard to their organizational structures, their view of the teaching function, and the nature of their reward systems. The differences in the demands the institutions make on their members are ultimately manifested in the way they set objectives and plan programs as well as in the kinds of professional behavior exhibited by the staff.

To get such collaborations off to a successful start, it is not uncommon for the partners to unconsciously refuse to face potential difficulties when the effort is first being organized. Thus, there is often a less than adequate effort to clearly define objectives and operational procedures except in the broadest terms. Closer definitions are, perhaps quite properly, postponed until later. Such agreement as does exist is often most clearly understood by the original negotiators, who are often not the people who have to execute the plan. There is no automatic transferral of either the formal or the informal aspects of such agreements to other levels of the organization. One result of all this is that gaps remain in the understanding of personnel in both organizations. These gaps exist not solely between the representatives of the two institutions but among colleagues functioning *within* each of the organizations; that is, between those who originally planned and those who are now expected to handle the day-to-day aspects of the program. Thus, the gaps are not only *between* but *within* organizations as well. There is often the need to reconcile many opposing views, different understandings, and contending forces.

It is no small wonder that few projects like this succeed, for the obstacles are many. Furthermore, similar efforts made in the past are often not taken seriously. Most new projects display a certain ahistorical outlook, behaving as if no such efforts have ever been made. Rarely is the previous experience of other educators carefully considered. In this respect, the project at P.S. 71 was not radically different from the norm. Under the press of time and anxious not to lose the momentum that had been established organizing the effort, we rushed in with far less preparation than most of us would have liked.

Despite the differences that existed between our collaborative efforts at I.S. 227 and P.S. 71, I am struck by the similarity in the key factors leading to the successes that have already been achieved in each school. It

becomes increasingly apparent that the support of the top leadership is an absolute essential. As with the Louis Armstrong Middle School, the partnership had the support of school administration, with the principal, assistant principal, and district superintendent strongly backing the project. On the college side, encouragement continued to come from President Cohen, Dean Lidstone, and Sid Trubowitz. In addition, the collaboration profited greatly from the involvement of Marvin Leiner, Chairman of the Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education. His support insured the availability of the resources represented by our professors of elementary education, and his keen insights about the nature of the bureaucratic process did much to keep our efforts grounded in reality.

It has also become clear that the person who serves as the liaison between college and public school occupies a key role. The fact that Sid and I were almost full time in our respective situations served to establish the college's visibility. It allowed us to become knowledgeable about the social-psychological climate that prevailed in each school and made it easier for us to operate in a manner sensitive to personal as well as institutional needs.

The experience has underscored the importance in any school-college collaboration of moving slowly, choosing college personnel carefully, and avoiding the pitfall of adopting the posture of "experts." I have observed how, particularly at the initial stages, bringing in concrete help such as computers, microscopes, interns, and student teachers can be a major means of establishing the college's capacity to make a constructive contribution.

The same kinds of problems have emerged in each situation as well. There appears to be the constant need to deal with teacher suspicion of universities and the resistances that result from a history of unsatisfactory relationships. This phenomenon stresses the need to maintain an historical perspective, for past experience will inevitably affect the future course of events. Another similarity between the two projects was the lack of time for planning. That is likely to remain a continuing problem as more and more collaborative efforts are attempted.

Despite some omissions and initial errors, we have gotten off to a good start at P.S. 71. A reasonable base has been created and we hope to continue building upon it. A majority of the teaching staff are able to see the college as a potential resource. A different spirit exists and the beginning of a useful collaboration has been established, one that allows both partners to offer what they do best. What will be required is continued goodwill, a reasonable degree of sensitivity to one another's needs, and the willingness of the different participants to persevere.

A key ingredient sustaining the projects has been the level of commitment made to support them by the administration of the college. Such efforts are not common and reflect a different vision of the college's mission on the part of the leadership at Queens. It is because that vision has allowed us to try things, to venture forth from the isolation of the classroom and directly test some of our beliefs, that we feel the projects hold such promise.

Much of the future of education in America will be forged in urban environments similar to those in which we are now working. We have chosen to be participants rather than observers in that process because we believe it will allow us to learn more, and in that way make more significant contributions to the way education can be improved in that environment.

# *APPENDICES*

# *APPENDIX A*
## *Interviews with the Principal and a Professor*

What follows are two edited transcripts of interviews with Anthony Sanfilippo, who was principal of I.S. 227 up until the summer of 1981 when he became District 24 Superintendent, and Professor Robert Edgar of the Department of Secondary Education at Queens College. No two people could differ more in overt style. Mr. Sanfilippo strikes everyone as an assertive (but nonaggressive), self-confident, take-charge "guy." It would be unfair to say that his bark is worse than his bite, unless by that you mean that initially his manner may strike you as intimidating. However, it does not take long before you begin to see him as sensitive and giving, characteristics that derive from strength, not weakness. Professor Edgar is a gentle, somewhat retiring individual who tends to undervalue and undersell himself, leading some people to miss the fact that he is as inner directed a person as you will find. He can be forthright and assertive, but such actions are not easy for him.

These interviews, conducted by Seymour Sarason, require no comment. Aside from the fact that these two people differ so from each other, we chose these interviews because they convey attitudes and conclusions quite relevant to college-school collaboration.

### An Interview With Anthony Sanfilippo

**Seymour Sarason:** Up until this summer, you were principal of I.S. 227. Now you are Superintendent again in a district. How do you feel?

**Anthony Sanfilippo:** Well, I'm sorry I left 227 because I am sure everybody realizes that after two years in a school the job has just begun. I think that had I

had maybe eight more years to be there it might even have been more worthwhile for all of us. I recall having been appointed July 1, 1979, when we supposedly had some 265 children, and lo and behold a week or so later we were informed by Zoning and Integration that most of those children, some 200 of them, were considered to be ineligible according to the court decision. Therefore, Bernie [Alfant, the assistant principal] and I and everybody else involved began to recruit in the most unorthodox ways, from advertising in the local block newspapers, to circulars, to standing on corners to recruit children. So that by the time September came around we had almost 200 children. That was a unique experience. In the wisdom of the Board of Education they staffed us for 400. Therefore, what we could do is have the entire program laid out so that as new children came in it became very easy to just place them in any of the classes, and since they were heterogeneously grouped, we weren't too concerned about the usual problems.

**SS:** When did you first learn about the Queens connection?

**AS:** In May from Superintendent Latty who let me see the plan, the outline, the goals, the philosophy. I liked it very much and that's what made me become enthusiastic. Once I knew that I was leaving District 24 I became an active pursuer of the principalship of 227.

**SS:** Let me not put words into your mouth, but my own past experience with school-college collaboration is that school officials have a certain degree of ambivalence about connecting with a college. Did you have any questions? What were the things that worried you, if any?

**AS:** You are hitting on a point to which many of my colleagues alerted me—before I even stepped into the building—that I was going to have some problems with the college. Their track record had not been the greatest in this area. NYU [New York University] had botched up a number of deals. My colleagues said: "Be very careful and don't give away your rightful authority, and don't abandon it, because if you do you'll find they'll walk all over you." To be perfectly honest with you, I'll give you the same answer I gave in the interviews at the Board of Ed with all the hot-shots there, including John Lidstone: reasonable men and women can arrive at reasonable compromises and solutions. I did not foresee any particular problem in that area. I don't want to sound egotistical. One of my strengths is working with people. I am not looking for power, I am not looking for subjugation of anyone, I am not looking to enslave minds. I am looking to do a job, and I know that men of goodwill, really, can arrive at conclusions. I had no problem with that area at all, and I also knew that I would not give up a bona fide prerogative of the principal. I would share it. But when I learned that Sid [Trubowitz] was going to be my counterpart, it made it even easier. A former school man, who knows pretty much the ins and outs of the Board of Ed—by the way, my prediction was correct. He was just that kind of person with whom we could really work. Now, whether two other people could work it out without a single problem—not a single problem—I don't know.

**SS:** How were the teachers selected?

**AS:** We advertised. We were in a good position because the massive layoffs and the transfer plan had been over. We were recruiting a little later than that [May 1979], so that we advertised in the newspapers, and we told the Central Personnel Office, and we interviewed. The college and the administration interviewed

candidate after candidate. There were dozens and dozens and dozens of resumes that we had the privilege of going through. The college professors did a yeoman job, by subject area. I think John [Lidstone] assigned or asked the professors to read the resumes and do some kind of a grading. And we were guided a good deal by that. By and large we did not take anyone we did not want. To be very honest, however, we also got stuck with a couple of people. Even when you have a kind of free wheeling situation, you're still going to exercise less than perfect judgment.

**SS:** Anthony, 227 was viewed from the very beginning as a community school. What did that mean?

**AS:** That's a very serious problem, because the student population did not really come from the immediate community. Because of the court order, it did not become a community school in the usual sense of the word. A number of residents, representing various organizations, not hostile by the way, came in and expressed disappointment that only some kids in the area can come to the school. However, the NAACP, for example, understood the legal reasoning behind the way the school was to be populated, so they accepted it. However, they also wanted to make sure that it did grow, as much as possible, into a community school. Therefore, the adult education program is in the building, Queens College's Continuing Ed program attracting local residents is also here, and our facilities are available to Elmcorps' youth, so that at the end of two years they were convinced of our goodwill, that we would do all the things we really could do to make it what they wanted. And by the way, to the best of my knowledge, that relationship is very good.

**SS:** Let's talk about that little outfit [School Community Program] that has the office across from yours. How were the people chosen for that? They were chosen because of the desegregation grant, weren't they?

**AS:** Yes. Well, the primary appointing agency for that was Queens College. However, they were professional and thoughtful enough to have me sit in on the interviews. Therefore, *de facto*, we were equal participants and we picked them together. Again, very fine candidates came for the jobs and we had a couple of difficult choices to make in that area. The college did it primarily, but I had a very nice share in that whole process, and what they did I certainly agreed with. I don't know if I had disagreed what would have happened, but it didn't happen.

**SS:** Administratively, that project is a result of a grant to Queens College, which puts it in a formal sense outside of the school system, meaning that the people on that project are employees of Queens College and not of the school system. Did that create any problems of identity, responsibility, etc.?

**AS:** Again, with great pride I felt they belonged to 227. True, I did not supervise them directly, but we became so friendly with them and again the working relationship with Sid and John made it such that none of us sat on that kind of ceremony. However, I must say this. I recognized they weren't "mine," and, therefore, I tried, I hope successfully, not to trespass any more into their territory than they did in mine. However, the Queens people came to us about what's going on and about what we want to do. So, if they were on Queens' payroll or my payroll, what was the difference? The goal was the improvement of that area of school life for 227.

**SS:** You hired teachers and you continued to hire teachers as the number of students increased in the first year. You had had formal relationships with colleges and universities before. What about your teachers, how did they view the relationship with Queens, how did they look upon the Queens faculty who were there? How did they work out relationships? What were the problems?

**AS:** The school started out as a very small entity. So, we were really a nice family. By the way, that should be a credit to the Board of Education in how they allowed this to develop. They were very sensitive to mistakes. We were a small student body, growing all the time up to that 400 mark. Sometime around January we met that goal. We did not change staff that first year. They were there in place. Okay, now to the spectrum of feelings. Since many of the people were experienced most said, "Hey, this is a new school. Queens College wants to help." And what were they looking at? Sid Trubowitz, hardly a threatening individual; Clarence Bunch, eager to do, eager to serve, he ingratiated himself with the Art Department almost overnight by making materials available, which to this day our Board of Ed has not delivered. Also, there was Professor Edgar in Social Studies, again a kind of true-and-tried professor with humble approaches to change, mature in his ways, so as a group they were nonthreatening to our staff, and everybody knew that the Queens people were not evaluators in terms of teacher performance. Since Queens College was so damned helpful, what could they resent? Now it is true that some of them, a minority, had the kind of skepticism that I'll put in a nutshell: "Well, they'll be here. They'll get a lot of publicity. They'll run around like chickens without heads, but they won't do anything. So don't worry about it." But, they gave the Queens College people a chance to develop. They all got student teachers. The important thing is that professors who supervised student teachers were, again, nonthreatening. The whole rapport was very, very professional. So all the things you read about and heard about in the past, Seymour, do not apply in this instance of college and school.

**SS:** There was nothing, I gather, in the documents that I have read that said that Queens faculty would spend X amount of time, nothing like that was spelled out. From your perception, and from what you know of the perception of teachers, how available were the Queens faculty?

**AS:** Those assigned were very available, anytime you wanted them. They were around a great deal. Anytime a teacher wanted somebody or something from Queens College, it never became—"Oh my God, they're never around, you can't get them." Sid was there virtually every day. Clarence Bunch, although he may not have been assigned there every day, wound up coming very frequently. Edgar, the same thing. In fact, he gave way over his own time. Perhaps the supervision of the student teachers could have been improved in terms of their scheduling and getting to see them. I think that probably can still be improved. Queens did not have a supervisor on-site all the time. But that didn't affect us so directly, because it was Queens College taking care of *its* student teachers. We were kind of an affiliate so what was I going to do, demand that the college come in more often? I am sure they had a budgetary problem there too.

**SS:** I gather that the college is establishing relationships with an elementary school in your district. As a District Superintendent, what plans do you have about trying to make these kinds of connections in relation to more schools? What are the limiting factors?

**AS:** A limiting factor could be money.

**SS:** As best as I can determine from the budget, if you take the $140,000 that goes to Queens, and then there is about $100,000 that comes in via the desegregation grant for the community-school program, and if you were to express that as a percentage of the total budget for 227, throwing in fringe benefits which never appear in the operational budget, we're talking of about one half of one percent of the entire budget of 227. I think if you figure the budget around $2 million, at the present time, that adds up to a lot of money, so we're talking about a very small amount in terms of a total budget of a school.

**AS:** You're absolutely right, Seymour. But now I am in a different position. I am now responsible to the Community School Board. If I spend a nickel or I spend $5 million, they want to know. Because they face a community now which says, "What are you doing at P.S. so and so, we need a teacher over here, we don't need some kind of fancy innovative program. Never mind, we've got an overcrowded classroom here." That's the kind of educational political problem that 227 really didn't face. 227 faced the problem of, let's say, a central office guy going over the budget with a fine comb with Bernie and me and Sid and a few other people, trying to save as much money as he could from his grant budget. But he didn't represent a vested interest out there looking to staff a school. Kind of a general moneysaver, if you will. Now we're in politics. I am very aware of that and I have to go easy on that point. However, I will agree also on another point. It *is* a pittance. The Queens input is infinitesimally small compared to the possible output, not to mention the total budget in my district. I have a budget of $33 million. It frightens me when I hear myself say it, you know. So if I'm putting $20,000 into a project, what the hell is that? But such pittances stand out. Why? Because 95 percent of it is eaten up by mandated salary contract. And you know what? That's good. I mean the concept is good, because it leaves less meddling in terms of outside forces who don't understand sometimes what it's all about. Let me tell you that that nonmandated five percent is guarded. If you're spending $50 for stamps, they want to know why you're spending $50 for stamps. Now you're spending $33 million.

I'll give you an example. There was a project underwritten by the state which started when I was originally superintendent. The state funded the salary of the director of that job, and the state must have put up about $150,000. When I came back, I saw that the project was not finished. It needed a pittance to be done, maybe $2,000. I spent it—and I got it done. It is being run off right now. A magnificent piece of work, I would say, that would have been allowed to lie fallow if I did not "have the courage" to just move it ahead and do it. I told the Board. I said "How do you leave an almost $200,000 project alone for the next $2,000? It just doesn't make sense." Well they would have left it. Another aide here, another para there, whatever. A strong superintendent is very important. An articulate one is very important. And one, of course, who is in favor with at least five Board members. It always helps to get the support.

So that's the reality of the money, you see. We don't really need a lot of money at 71 to do what we have to do. There is no doubt in my mind that much of what we can do depends upon the goodwill of teachers, of the community and of all of us to put in a little bit of ourselves so that the money makes it look good. The teachers are happy when some things are being underwritten; they figure something is happening. And if they make a little money themselves in the

process, that's great. So, my conclusion is that money is always used as an excuse to stop innovation. Not really to do the job, because you usually can do these things. You can't build a new school or modernize overnight let's say. But a lot of things in the classroom can be changed very quickly, with a minimum amount of money. I am convinced of that after thirty-one years in the system. Money is not the answer. That is a very unpopular way to start any conference, by the way. If you tell this to a group of principals or to a group of my colleagues they want to kill you because they think that what you are saying is that you are not going to ask for more money. You've got to ask for more money. Politically, I understand that. But I am talking about reality now. You look at the budget of 227, about the things we brag about. They cost very, very little to do. That's the truth of the story.

**SS:** You started off with 200 students at 227 when it opened, and then by mid-year you had admitted another 200. The following year it doubled to about 800. How did you handle that kind of a jump?

**AS:** That first year it was a family. It really was very closely knit. It reminds me of what someone said: secondary schools shouldn't be more than 500. I see a lot of wisdom in that idea. Having two, three thousand kids in a building, you lose something. You gain a few things but you also lose a lot more. Now the philosophy of the school, as I understand it, was that the child is free. There is a free spirit in that building, children are going to be treated that way, they are going to learn to be responsible for themselves. By the end of the first year, we agreed that there were certain children that were not really meant for the 227 atmosphere and climate. They couldn't handle it. They didn't know what the hell to do with the freedom. Nobody watched them go from class to class. There were no deans to be reported to. There was a very small percentage of children who could not hack this and became very serious disciplinary problems. Now you double the size of the school, and you've doubled your problem children too. And I daresay, that some of my colleagues did a number on us in giving us their most difficult children.

**SS:** Can you explain that, when you say your colleagues?

**AS:** I mean other principals from other districts. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. Maybe they wanted to give their difficult children another chance somewhere and showed the parents the possibilities of going to 227. We took all of them, by the way—and some turned out to be very serious problems. Imagine taking a really disturbed child and putting him into a relatively free situation. We could not demand our teachers to come out like gendarmes.

**SS:** How many students are there now?

**AS:** There are probably about 1,300 students now, including special ed, and that's another whole bag. Special education has the potential of making 227 other than what it is.

**SS:** Can you elaborate on that?

**AS:** Because of the pressures on the Committee on the Handicapped to test and evaluate and ultimately assign children who are labeled special ed. Nobody will admit it, but there are negotiations with the parent. Like, what label will you take? You have children who really should be in the neurologically impaired or emotionally handicapped classes, and instead they are put into Health Conserva-

tion (HC 30) class, which is the first rung below the so-called normal child. That class is supposed to be easiest to handle, the group first to go back into the mainstream. Well, I can assure you that by the end of the school year we had a dozen HC 30 children who were tearing the building apart, physically tearing it apart. They now have maybe 120 special education children in that building. This could be a problem for any principal, particularly since 227, from the point of view of supervision and administration, is short-handed. That school should have a minimum of two licensed assistant principals, in addition to the principal.

SS: Why are the special ed children so severe a problem?

AS: We tried to make those kids, and we really should be given a great deal of credit, as much a part of the school as possible, subject as much as possible to the same spirit and climate. Some kids couldn't handle the freedom of going from class to class, the multiplicity of subjects. On the other hand, there were some who adjusted beautifully, and they loved it. I'd say the majority did. Just as with some "normal" children, some of them did not belong in the kind of school that 227 was. Now that bothers me somewhat. If we were developing a model for the city, what child doesn't belong there? Therefore 227 has to look at itself, evaluate, and maybe make some changes to save the whole thing. I don't know that with 1,300 children, with 120 special ed, that the freedom we loved and enjoyed can continue.

SS: You're raising a very important theoretical and practical question. What you're suggesting is that one has to consider the match between the child and the ambience, the atmosphere of the school in the same way that one should take into account the match between the child and a teacher.

AS: We should add the child and the parent, too.

SS: How much control did you have over the special ed thing?

AS: Virtually none. The children were sent to us. Here again is the problem of a centralized function. Even though we were a centralized school, we were not centralized as far as special ed goes. Special ed is still a separate entity unto themselves. And we had some very serious personnel problems. That played a very important role in compounding the problem I refer to.

SS: The problem of the kids?

AS: No, the problem of the teacher.

SS: That is, the problem of the teacher compounding the problem of the kids.

AS: Exactly. In fact, directly related to the problem of those children was the teacher who, although none of us can actually prove it, unduly incited not only the children but the parents as well.

SS: Can you elaborate?

AS: The teacher became a private counselor to the kids and the parents about their rights: What should be done, how it should be handled, if they were being short-changed. He became a child advocate on our staff. We were all child advocates, but he became, if you know what I mean, a real professional advocate, and he made our lives very difficult.

SS: Can you be even more specific?

**AS:** For example, he would challenge the IEPs [Individualized Education Plans] that were done for these children and he would tell the parents, "Well this is the IEP, why don't you demand and make sure that all of this is really done." You know and I know that the IEP is a very theoretical thing too, iffy at best. So he would have the parents all psyched up, make all kinds of telephone calls to us and to downtown about the IEPs: (a) they are not complete, (b) they are inaccurate or if they are accurate, why aren't you doing it? Things of that kind. And then he was also telling the children in effect that teachers are not your bosses, they can't tell you what to do all the time, you have rights. Where does the special ed kid begin to differentiate and sift what he should challenge, what he should question? So those who were on the fringe, let's say not being able to be channeled properly, became notorious. One was virtually a criminal, police record and everything. His job, on the side, was robbery.

**SS:** What was the relationship, if any, of Queens College to special ed and the problems you were having in special ed?

**AS:** The relationship as far as they could go was superb. The professor in charge was very interested, active, motivated, and gave more time than she had to. But she did not have, as I did not have, that final ability to transfer that teacher out of the school. I couldn't move the teacher, nor could the informal conversations by Queens College move that teacher, because he had unassailable rights. You see, he was not an unsatisfactory teacher. So when we told him, in a sense, "Hey, shut up, tell those parents to come to us if they have a gripe. We're not asking you to cover up, we're not asking you to lie, we're just saying function as a teacher, and refer those troubled parents to us, the administration, for handling." He did refer them to us, but armed with information, with clauses in the law, their rights, etc., etc. And those parents drove us bananas. I have a couple who call me now to intercede in their good behalf in some way or other about a problem they may have, and I back off. I say, "Thanks for calling, but no thanks. I am sure you can handle that problem." Six months ago they were ready to cut me down, if you know what I mean. Most special ed parents are a special problem. By the way, although special ed prides itself on giving you the staff, the prep periods, and so on, in no way does that compensate for the actual time that has to be put in to keep that program going. An inordinate amount of time was spent with special ed. And that takes away from the other kids. By the way, I am not suggesting for a minute that they should not be in that building.

**SS:** How did the eight o'clock in the morning program get started?

**AS:** It was a Queens College idea, and for the two years I was there it was very, very successful. If it was not as successful as we wanted it was because we may have chosen the wrong activity, or that activity may have been in conflict with a very good activity, and since children had options, the good activities prevailed. But the concept, the implementation of it, the cooperation—it's a winner. It's something we can brag about to the whole country in terms of what you can do before school starts. As a matter of fact, I take my wares with me: the wares of I.S. 227 into District 24. I am doing it a little bit at a time. I found out I have to go slowly at principals' conferences. I talk to a principal, I have a little conversation, and I make suggestions. One of my junior highs is going to try the Early Bird program. I figure if I get a pilot program going it would be nice for other schools to see it.

**SS:** What about the after school program?

**AS:** I would say a mixed bag because, first of all, school ends at a quarter to four, so many children want to go home, they are on a bus, so they don't stay for after school. Although—now you come to the other part of it—when you have a production like *West Side Story* under way from October through June, those kids were there every afternoon, every rehearsal. This is telling me that where there is motivation, where it meets a need the children have, the activity is very, very good, no doubt about it. Most important is the teacher assigned to that activity. I would say that makes the difference because the teacher can recruit if he or she is an effective teacher—that teacher has a following, and that following comes with them after school. Take Jim Jordan, for example, with phys. ed. He developed a swimming program on his own time. I gave him a little time to do it, but nowhere near what he himself put into it: (a) he loves the work; (b) he is into swimming personally, and (c) the kids adore him; and (d) he is willing.

**SS:** Where does this swimming take place?

**AS:** It is organized in school, but he uses the City, if you will. He uses the boys clubs, he has his own personal contacts, YMCAs. We had the Queens College pool the first year but that stopped the second year because of repairs and scheduling. That should be looked into because it is a great activity for kids. We advertise it as a great sport, but again the goodwill of a teacher—there is no replacement for that. That's why the after school programs worked out very well. Our program with Caumsett, where the children slept overnight, was great again because the teachers slept over with them.

**SS:** What commitment does 110 Livingston Street [headquarters of the New York City Central Board of Education] have to school-college collaboration? What do they know about the collaboration in terms of 227?

**AS:** When you say "110," you know it's an empire. I think the Chancellor knows the broad outlines of what's going on, and he gets periodic positive feedback, and I was one of those sources. I suppose looking at him with the idea that he has a million problems, if he knows that one is in good hands, he is not going to take an interest on a day-to-day basis. His designees had a very active interest, and they paid numerous visits to the school. One of them, Dr. Oliver, became very conversant with the school, and no one really interfered, or even said "Hey, I don't think you ought to do that." One came close to that. She went into the classrooms, and naturally with any classroom you're bound to find something negative. She upset those teachers a great deal and was pretty rough in her observations. I am not quarreling with her right. I profited from her observations of teachers, and we put it to some good.

**SS:** In District 24 what higher education facilities are there besides Queens College?

**AS:** St. John's is readily available to people in my schools. Fordham is another one that's available, based upon where they live and is easily accessible.

## An Interview With Robert Edgar

**Seymour Sarason:** What were the factors that powered you to participate in the 227 venture?

**Robert Edgar:** It was simply an administrative matter. There was the decline in the number of social studies teachers and candidates to become social studies teachers. This led to availability of time in my schedule and I was assigned to 227 and began to supervise student teachers there. And sort of naturally, the demand for my time at the college did not increase, if anything it had declined, and so I've given more and more time.

**SS:** What got you involved once you were over there?

**RE:** It was the opportunity to work closely in a school. Even though I have been at the college for over 30 years, prior to I.S. 227 I never really had the time or allotted opportunity to get involved in a school, that is to have a feeling that I participated in making any decisions or could really influence what was going on in the school. 227 had an open quality that most schools don't have. I had worked in experiments with other schools at other times. I was involved from 1961 to 1965 in what they called the Bridge project. There we worked in a South Jamaica ghetto school with three recent graduates of the college in an experimental program. There was something about the openness, the welcome atmosphere that I found at 227, that even at J.H.S. 8 where we had worked for those four years I never felt quite that relaxed in a situation. I don't know what it was. This developed gradually. I don't suppose that I could have envisioned two years ago that I would feel the way I do about I.S. 227. So my involvements, not from the college's point of view but my point of view, is somewhat accidental, and somewhat a response to a situation that I found responsive.

**SS:** When you say responsive you mean the social studies teachers were responsive?

**RE:** I would say one of the critical factors in the situation was Sid [Trubowitz]. I don't know Sid well. He and I had been around the college for a long time, but I had never worked with him. I have been trying to analyze his qualities that make for a success in this relationship. I think it's his complete lack of hostility. He doesn't project that he is sensitive about his personal stakes in this thing, and therefore he never reacts as if he feels threatened in any way. And so that was a key factor. Anthony [Sanfilippo] was welcoming too in his way, but his goals were within the New York City system and I felt that he didn't really consider me an important figure in his career one way or the other. He rather liked me personally so we got along well. Now for the social studies teachers. I think that originally one of them, Jay Stonehill, was rather guarded in his response to me. He has always come across to me as a person who wants to guard his private life very carefully for reasons that I don't understand, and the way in which this manifests itself professionally is that he doesn't want to commit himself to activities that will interfere with his private life. The other social studies teacher, Julian Seid, knew me before the school was open. In sharp contrast to Jay, he was overly eager to be on equal terms with any college personnel that he came in

contact with and to give evidences of his knowledge of new developments in social studies teaching. Actually, it wasn't really until the next year when these two men were joined by Bob Norman and Jeffrey Arkin that I began to feel that I was being really accepted into the group and that my role was gradually evolving and that they understood it and accepted it and so on.

**SS:** In regard to the role of social studies in the school, what do you stand for, what would you like to see, what is your agenda insofar as social studies is concerned?

**RE:** One of the reasons I still have a very high interest in 227 is this problem of trying to think through what it is that I would like to have happen there, and how do I go about behaving in a situation in order to try to realize this. In the meeting that you and I had together last year along with a group of people in which I spoke a good deal, I found a willingness there to think about the improvement of a school in fairly modest terms. One of the things that I had personally found difficult is the need for college professors to constantly reinforce their superiority to what they see in existence in the school. I found that a nonproductive attitude because teachers responded with "We are in there actually engaged in the schools and you are sitting on the sidelines and telling us what to do and you have not earned the authority to do that sort of thing." The consequence is this maintenance of the gap between the two.

My primary concern is what it is that produces high-quality education or how do you raise the quality of education. I think of this in very general terms. A school is a complex social phenomenon and it is not so responsive to improvement as people who speak and write like to think it is. It is built into the lives and inter-relationships of teachers and principals and students and institutions, etc., so that it is a very immovable kind of thing. So, the thing that I enunciated at that meeting is that you have to be content with small increments and that these small increments are to be valued and not dismissed because they don't satisfy what is often a political need for dramatic improvement.

So my general goal in social studies is to try to improve the quality of the educational experience for the children, and I see this primarily as the improvement of the quality of life that teachers project in their classroom. To me, therefore, my job becomes how can I help to maintain in the social studies teachers the feeling that they are engaged in interesting, perhaps even important, work. Julian, who is by far the most veteran of the teachers, having taught over twenty years, once brought up a thesis that teachers are burned out, and I don't feel that that describes Julian at all. I just think that to a certain extent Julian has lost his motivation, and it is not because he has given his all and has been burned out. It is simply because he doesn't find very many motivating factors in the situation. So I guess I feel that I must be a motivating factor in the school. How do I think I motivate people? By being responsive to their ideas, by encouraging them when they have them, by trying to work out ways of participating with them in their ideas and inevitably being influenced by my own ideas, by trying to conjoin my ideas with their ideas.

Let me give you an illustration. One of the teachers, Bob Norman, is interested in movies, especially movies on TV. I encouraged him to tape programs that he thought were of social and historical importance. He has begun to do that. For example, he taped a program called "The Wave" about a schoolteacher who experimented with the creation of a totalitarian atmosphere in school. When he

was studying twentieth century Europe he used this. On Thursday he and I are going to a conference in New York City of social studies teachers, where we plan to attend together a program on the use of videotape cassettes in the classroom. That's a given instance of being responsive. I do not go in so much with the idea that I want them to adopt this "discovery" method in social studies, and this is the way you do it, and then teach them how to do the discovery method. I like the discovery method, but . . .

**SS:** You're there to encourage, to motivate. You're not there to put yourself into their heads. Are there any other ingredients?

**RE:** One of the things that I think is very interesting here, that happened again sort of by accident, is that I had student teachers with these teachers. Therefore, a great deal of the focus of our attention is on the student teachers. This gives us a common task that is nonthreatening, gives us an opportunity to talk over things that are not based on my constantly pushing them to further tasks, and so on, to satisfy some need I have. One of the ingredients is the idea of a common task producing good relationships.

I have tried, by the way, to take up certain ideas I have had. I am interested in categorizing aspects of social studies so that we can become more diagnostic in our teaching. Over the years I have come back to the simple categories that are often taught to students who would be journalists. In history, for example, we are interested in who, what, when, where, why and how. And you can use these categories in a diagnostic way. So I have built a test, with other teachers' acceptance, that divides units based on these categories, for example, the American Revolution was one of them, the Westward movement was another, the events leading up to the Civil War a third, and I have tried to isolate who, what, when, where, the space problems, and so on, the why problems, the cause-and-effect relationships, and I have tried to build a test with the idea that they should be given to the children in the social studies class before the unit is taught and then given again when the unit is completed so that the students can actually see a numerical basis for how much progress they have made. The teachers, at the same time, are supposed to be able to look at the results student by student and get some impression of where the student seems to be strongest and weakest.

Now, interestingly enough, only one of the teachers, Bob Norman, has seized on this with any enthusiasm. The rest of them, if I pursue it, are willing to use the tests, but will not use them spontaneously. In other words, I haven't convinced them to absorb the idea into what they do. And one of my dilemmas, as a consultant to the social studies teachers, is the problem of authority in bringing about curriculum development. I am not sure that I have clarified that entirely for myself. I often think that within the context of the New York system, where they're used to top-down authority, what you do is go into a situation and say, "Well here's an idea," and you get their acceptance of it through discussion and logical examination of it, and they see that it probably has potential, and then you develop an administrative structure which will put it into effect and keep it in effect. I think there's something to be said for that, but I haven't actually seen myself, as I examine my role, as functioning that way.

I might say, just to put it on the record here, that one of the things that happened to me last year is that I became genuine friends with the four social studies teachers. My attitude basically toward their work must be a positive attitude, not how they are failing to do the things that teachers ought to be doing

these days, but what is it that they do that I can respond to and reward. In the beginning I found myself in private conversations saying negative things about them, as a way to preserve my position of superiority to them. But I gradually abandoned that idea and I found, as a result, insight into their responsiveness. I found that they were making positive statements about me to people. So I think that was a very important part. I don't want to leave the impression that I feel that important developments are going to occur in the field of social studies because of really sound human relationships that have been built. These were small increments, but I do feel that the social studies area in the school is more vital as a result.

**SS:** If I am not mistaken I heard you once talk about your work, in Syracuse or someplace like that. What was the response?

**RE:** The strange thing to me at this meeting was my growing realization that the people who listened to what I had to say about my cooperation with the social studies teachers in the school felt that it was very unique and desirable and they had never experienced it themselves. All of us were of the same type, college or university people supervising student teachers. And I had a feeling that they responded very positively, the way I do myself to a person who speaks out of the authority of genuine experience.

If I could just introduce one more subject. I have been mystified by the problem of curriculum in the public schools because I find it completely neglected on the part of administrative offices. In all my teaching experience I do not find administrators paying attention to curriculum. Their lives seem to be devoted to running the affairs of the school. They have no time for really finding out what teachers do and participating with them in what they do. The fact that I have never seen it leads me to what might be a kind of defeatist tradition, but it apparently is almost impossible for them to do this, in terms of the tasks that press on them in the schools.

**SS:** Is it that, or is it that they don't know how to do it except by imposing their conceptions on the teachers?

**RE:** It may be that. I like all of these things and we're both of us conscious of the complexity of a social institution. I find that schools are centers of crisis after crisis, that is, the weather comes up, and the buses, and children are late, etc. The other factor I see at work is that the staff is in a structure and they're moving upward or hope to move upward in the structure, and I think the way in which you do it does not call for an important role in developing curriculum in the school. I don't know whether they have the real desire to do it or they can't do it. They also tend, I think, to see the task in the way that I do not see it, I wouldn't want to say that the way I see it is the truth. They have peer tutoring in our school, and so they encourage the program of peer tutoring and build an administrative structure that perhaps facilitates this, and so on. I, myself, do not find that approach to maintaining and improving the quality of education interesting. Somehow or other I feel—for example, when you asked me the question "What do I see as the goals of social studies," I'd like to engage the social studies teachers, insofar as they will respond, to the question of just what is it we are trying to do in social studies. And in a realistic sense, not that we are preparing citizens for life in a democratic society which, again, no one can reject, but that's not what I see social studies teachers committed to when I go into their

classrooms. So I feel that our tasks are primarily the development of cognitive skills related to seeking understandings of the society in which we live and how it got this way and what its implications are, rather than in more global terms, like the communication of democratic attitudes. I feel that those are implicit in a more explicit task which is concerned with typically the social studies.

**SS:** An argument could be made that you're doing far more teaching now than if you came back to teaching on campus. In terms of formal teaching, and I don't mean standing in front of a classroom, you're doing a hell of a lot more teaching.

**RE:** I recognize that. I do find it personally embarrassing to be praised for what I am doing. Whatever merit my behavior does have should be evaluated in recognition of the smallness of the increments that are involved. Most of the time in education you don't talk about the change in teachers that comes about when they feel that somebody is attending to what they are doing and therefore makes them feel that the profession is more rewarding for them. Teachers are very isolated creatures, and I do think that we have to build in opportunities for professional-social kinds of relationships that will keep them stimulated.

# *APPENDIX B*

## *Four Interviews:*

### *John Lidstone, Dean of Teacher Education*

### *Clarence Bunch, Chairman of the Secondary Education Department*

### *Eileen Byrnes, Parent of a Child at the Louis Armstrong Middle School*

### *Betty Bogart, Teacher at the Louis Armstrong Middle School*

There is an unintended common theme in the following four interviews. Drs. Lidstone and Bunch were interviewed for two reasons. They were, in addition to Dr. Trubowitz, key people in the project. Dr. Lidstone is Dean of Teacher Education and Dr. Bunch is Chairman of the Department of Secondary Education. The other reason is that both were intent on insuring that music and art would be major, integrated parts of the curriculum at I.S. 227. So, for example, Dr. Bunch was responsible for setting up the art museum—as attractive a small gallery as one would see anywhere—which is used in diverse ways by many teachers. However, I.S. 227 was not set up by the city to be a school where music and art would be key features. That they became so is the result of the planning, energies, and finagling of the Queens-I.S. 227 connection. With Dr. Bunch as the chief finagler, the art museum was set up and integrated into the curriculum, and with each passing month that integra-

tion spreads. Only through the medium of colored films could one get the sense of what the museum looks like, how it is used, the compelling nature of the exhibits, and the behavior (that is, question asking) of children in it.

The third interview is with a parent and the fourth with a teacher. When we asked them to be interviewed, we did not know how their interest in I.S. 227 derived from their music-art-dancing interests. We did not know, for example, that within twenty-four hours after the parent first visited I.S. 227 in 1979 and found out about its music and art components, she transferred her daughter to I.S. 227. Nor did we know that the teacher had gone to a music and art high school.

We feel the need to stress that, both before and at the beginning of each interview, Dr. Sarason emphasized with each interviewee the importance of candor. In his words, "We wanted to avoid the impression that we wanted to hear only good things and to keep the bad things under the rug, so to speak." But, as all the interviews indicate, the interviewees said far more positive than negative things. Although their reactions undoubtedly are more rosy than reality would substantiate, a reality that we tried to convey in earlier parts of this book, they nevertheless convey an atmosphere rather unusual in college-school relationships.

## An Interview With John Lidstone

**Seymour Sarason:** Could you begin by saying what the School of Education hoped to gain in this collaboration?

**John Lidstone:** I think there are different levels of involvement. I think one of the things was trying to come to grips with the fact that there are certain models that get in the way of an effective college-school relationship. One is that Queens, for a long time, has had what I would call a service model. That is what schools like, and they are constantly at us to get students and faculty into the schools to assist them in new or already established programs, many of which we are not that gung-ho about. I think when we had the opportunity through the President's enthusiasm to get into the new school, we went into it with a lot of apprehension. I would say we had tempered enthusiasm.

But one of the things I feel was in the back of our minds was that we could work in a more productive manner and try to shake up that service-type model, because of what's happened to the faculty. They have a favorite school where they send their student teachers and the students always have good experiences in those schools and there is a nice relationship between the college and the school. The faculty are comfortable there and obviously functional. However, nothing changes. We are not change agents in that thing.

Now, in this particular school there were two or three things we liked. One was the fact that we might change that model. Instead of providing services and

support, we would really be change agents. And that put a lot of oomph into what we were doing. I think the second thing is we felt the middle schools in New York City are really disaster areas. The way the city goes at it is that they like to have massive plans that go across all schools, and they have committee meetings, they bring in experts, etc., and then they come up with a view of the "perfect school" and they then impose that on the system. We really felt that we would like to work in another way and build up a model for a school in which we would work very differently. We went into the school with just a few simple ideas, not with a great plan in mind. And we played it step by step, using our intuition and our professional background. I think when some of those things began to catch on, and I could see we were making some progress, that's when enthusiasm mounted.

SS: What is it that made you think that in this relationship you wouldn't be totally in the service model?

JL: One of the factors involved was we felt that the age grouping for the junior high school was frozen into the societal mode of let's say the twenties. Kids have obviously changed dramatically since that time, but this model persisted. We felt that if we could set up a new age group immediately, the school would have to adjust to that and that would give us a foot in the door, as it were, to experiment a bit. We were getting out of the mold. None of the curriculum guides really fitted the pattern we were setting. We did that purposely. You have to realize, Seymour, we also were realists. We had been in the schools for years, Sid particularly, having been a principal in New York City. So we set up the Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades. We didn't know whether this school was going to succeed or not, knowing the machinations of the Board, but we felt we might hang on to our idea. I think by changing the learning situation we felt that we were the people that to a certain extent would give leadership instead of fitting into a pattern.

SS: How clear was it to the people in the Board of Eduction or at I.S. 227 as to what your purposes were, if only in a general way?

JL: The Board of Education was not interested in any kind of change. The only reason we got into that school was that they had built this multimillion dollar edifice which had been sitting there, a white elephant, and what they wanted was the prestige of a college to get this school launched and to convince community groups that because we were there something of a positive nature would happen. Now, as we know, we were double crossed on that, because in fact the Board went ahead and did exactly what it wanted. But on the other hand, I can remember when I used to teach Saturday morning classes and friends of mine would say: "You know all that is high-class baby sitting." I would say, "I don't care what you think it is. The point is that there are kids there, and we're there, and whatever the auspices we have a chance to do something." And I think we saw the school somewhat in the same vein. We felt that we could get there and we could be with the kids and we could assume some sort of leadership. Then, maybe, the people who were uninterested would become interested.

SS: Could you say a little bit more about what the role of the Center was?

JL: Our major motivation was not to get into the school business, school management. Our idea of ourselves was that we were striking out in new directions that had universal application. We realized we were working basically

in a hostile environment because the Board of Education in New York is very complex. It is made up of all sorts of little people and big people, most of whom—although we have met some delightful and very effective people—are threatened by change. So we weren't terribly hopeful that we might make instant impressions on them with ideas. With the Center, however, we had hoped that in whatever time we had available to us we could begin to accumulate knowledge through action rather than through committees or research. We could fire our furnace, as it were, for the sort of school that we envisioned. Not one school—no one prototype—but the sort of thing that might be more effective in the middle school group. So we founded the Center, set up a data bank, set up some Institutes to go with that, with the feeling that if we got into a conflict with the Board, and I think that that is still looming, we would be all set to say: "Here we are, we have a Center, we have background, we have collected data, we're all set if anybody else is interested." That interest has occurred already, because we are now starting at the district level in an elementary school. We have a conference that is coming up about the involvement of our center with an elementary school.

**SS:** Could you be a little bit more concrete? When you talk about what you wanted to accomplish, you said, "Kids have changed obviously." What are the major ways in which they have changed and how does that get reflected in what you wanted to do?

**JL:** There are some things that are endemic to the New York situation and there are some things that are universal truths. In New York City, elementary schools have no art, music, drama, and physical education. Libraries are locked. It is a very task-oriented, well-controlled, paternalistic sort of situation. If you were to go into an elementary school you would probably by impressed by the behavior of the children, that fact that they are all busy at tasks, etc. But in actual fact a lot of this is training rather than education. If you took kids, at least in grades five and six, and contrasted their out-of-school behavior with their in-school behavior you'd find very few crossovers. We know that lots of those kids go home to an apartment with a single parent, have a key to get into the apartment, probably start dinner, may even do some of the shopping or are baby-sitters, ride the subways on their own, and so on. Now when they are in elementary school, when they move from one room to another, they all march to Glocca Morra! So one of the things we were hoping to do was to create an atmosphere of controlled freedom where the kid was more himself, because our feeling was that life and education shouldn't be separated.

**SS:** Let me ask this question. If John Lidstone were not as much the artist, the art educator that he is, if somebody else had been in your position, isn't it likely that that emphasis would not have art on the agenda?

**JL:** On the surface I'd say that that is correct. Incidentally, I should mention that I was not in art education. I was an elementary principal, but I was so impressed with what you can do through the arts, with the arts in a very broad sense, that I switched to art education really as a means to better education. In fact the chairpersons of our different departments basically had exactly the same feelings that I did, but it's very possible that somebody else might go at this differently.

**SS:** It seems to me that you have been, in some ways, remarkably successful in getting the arts a much more central place in education, if not co-equal with the so-called cognitive areas, at least it begins to approximate that.

**JL:** I think actually there was very little opposition to us doing that. We were given very meager support in getting the sort of programs we wanted at I.S. 227, mostly because of the hiring regulations. You must realize that this school was put together in just a matter of months and that we would not be allowed certain liberties just because 227 happened to be a demonstration school. We would not be allowed to get teachers who were interested in change. We had to get whoever was at the top of the hiring list. I feel that this part of the program has been very successful but I feel if we had been given just a little bit more freedom it would have been fantastically successful.

We thought getting away from the rigid grade structure was important because we knew that the transition from elementary school to junior high school is something the city has given absolutely no thought to. I mean at the end of June the kid is in a very heavily regimented classroom, a protectively oriented setting in a relatively small school, and in September he is in a great big school with maybe eight teachers that are taking care of him instead of one, and that transition has not been smooth at all. We felt that some elementary school-like elements should be in the junior high school. One of the things that helps the transition are the arts, broadly speaking, because they are activities where the kid is interacting with people. I think your suggestion when we started—for a camp-like summer school to introduce new students, or to get new students to intermingle with students who are already in the school—worked very well. Once again, that was very much based on experiential activities.

**SS:** The participation of faculty was voluntary?

**JL:** That is correct.

**SS:** I have been impressed with the number of committees you are on for New York City schools, now and in past years. So the question in my mind is, after all those experiences, what permitted you to get up a head of steam to go into I.S. 227? The same question could be asked of any member of the faculty. Why were they getting involved now when the past history was not a happy one?

**JL:** Well, masochism explains. To start with, I am trying to analyze this in a very amateurish way, but nevertheless I'll proceed. When the President came to us with the idea that we might like to go into this school, we just happened to have, and I think Sid would agree with me, three excellent chairpersons who were very down to earth about the problems we might have with the faculty. At that particular time we had a lot of big projects going here, the Teacher Corps, Day Care Centers, etc. Each of those projects was not presented to the faculty to decide what they would like to do about it. In other words, people who were interested were in the project, they recruited like-minded people to work for them, and so forth. So we decided we would not, as it were, go public to the faculty. We had one meeting, which I didn't even want to have, which was a disaster. So we decided that 227 would be just like any other project: those people who were interested would be in it and those people who weren't, wouldn't.

Now that worked to a certain extent, except in staffing the school with our faculty. Chairpersons were rather prone, if somebody had a light schedule or something like that, to assign them to the school, and that in some way made them feel their obligation was then taken care of. Now Sid, who of course had the major responsibility, immediately spotted that some of these people were not only going to be ineffective, they might even be destructive because their

backgrounds were not up to what was happening. So we went through a winnowing period. Now, what is surprising is that the people who were working there were becoming more enthusiastic, even though the problems were multiplying. And I don't think I'm exaggerating. There are people who I never would have guessed would devote all sorts of time to the school for no reward. No one gets any real extrinsic reward for working there, no material rewards at all. Now, I think one of the reasons for this is that Sid is very good at working with people, and so they feel comfortable when they're there and they know there's an interest in what they're doing. The other thing is that maybe the departure from the service model is beginning to catch on and these people are feeling that they're doing more than they were when they were basically supervising students at the school. That is not true of our full faculty by any means because our biggest department is elementary education. But now that we're going into an elementary school, there is a great deal of enthusiasm in people who don't fit in the junior high project but who want to apply this new middle school model to an elementary school.

**SS:** If whatever funding Queens gets were to dry up, what do you think would happen?

**JL:** Well, that would cause us problems obviously. There are two or three aspects to that. At the moment some of our faculty, because of enrollment figures which are a little uneven, can be spared to work in the school and that, I am sure, could continue. There are some areas where there would be gaps in what we're doing. My own hunch is, however, that we would continue in some manner. As a matter of fact, if I was given the choice between money and a free hand I would take the latter, since many of our resources have been wasted because of the adverse conditions that have been set up by the Board of Education, and that's really because of petty officials there who do not like to see the ideas become reality. We would like to see the junior high school destroyed and a new form of middle school education emerge. But they know that and they are not keen about it. However, it's going to happen. It is inevitable that the education of adolescents is just going to have to change, and it's got to become more holistic.

**SS:** Do you think this would be any different if this were not in New York City?

**JL:** I would say that if you're working in an urban situation where you have a massive organization which tends to be pyramidal you'd have the same problems we are having here. However, you might just possibly find that if it wasn't quite as massive, that it would be easier. We do know of systems that, when they set up special demonstration schools, make special provisions for them because they realize the beneficial effects of setting models. New York City is really not into taking a situation and developing it. As I have mentioned, it is a very political sort of a model. So, for instance, you get something like the Gates program [this program mandates that children in the fourth and seventh grades may be promoted only if they score no less than a year and a half below grade level] which at the moment involves about 7,000 grade fours and 10,000 grade sevens, and they just say that a child cannot go beyond grade four to grade seven until he has reached certain academic levels. That's the sort of thinking or model that is popular here. In other words, we are not in a city that has a long history of experimentation. And, incidentally, that Gates program is in big trouble so far as I can make out. It is not organic. I should emphasize that point that we are not

thinking about a prototype middle school. The Chancellor set up the Middle School Committee to look into "schools of the eighties." Sid and I are on that committee. I think we have affected that committee a lot. It now has a master plan for the middle schools for the city but who knows how it will be implemented.

**SS:** Anthony Sanfilippo left this September as principal of 227 and I know that you and Sid were on a committee for the selection of a principal. I gather that the Chancellor has not yet made a decision as to who would be principal. It is now the end of January and this is creating all kinds of problems at 227. What I am suggesting is that this is an example of where something doesn't happen and you can't make it happen because of factors outside of your control. How serious do you think this delay in appointing a principal has been, and what will happen if they just let it go another two months or three months?

**JL:** To start with, I am delighted that many of the positive aspects of the school which I think have come about because of the college's participation are really functioning quite well. If you were to go into that school now I don't think you would sense a deterioration of the basic ideas. However, we needn't have a lame duck principal. Maybe some of the supporting aspects of the school are slowly being eroded. For instance, there have been many more suspensions than we felt would ever happen in the school. Plus the fact that it is very difficult for us to make plans because a principal, of course, is a very key figure. So I think it is a very negative factor, but that is characteristic of the way you have to work with the Board.

**SS:** How many suspensions are you talking about?

**JL:** I think we've had about thirty. Most had to do with special education students in the school, who are very age inappropriate to the school. They are not the real student body of the school but are students who have been imposed on us. But I would think with a strong office in the school, this would have been handled in a different manner. Suspensions have never really been a problem. It is only now that I am aware of it. But that's the sort of think where there is little point in us sitting down with the principal and saying let's try to understand this. The present incumbent obviously can't become overly enthusiastic about new plans when he thinks he is just a caretaker. Plus the fact that the new principal might have a completely opposite idea about the situation and we would have to deal with him in a different manner. But I think the nonappointment of the principal illustrates very well the lethargy and apathy of this giant sort of organization of which we are just a little drop in the bucket in their day-by-day problems. But, on the other hand, I think it is good for us to get involved in all this. If you're going to work in public schools in New York City you might as well understand the mystique or whatever it is, and I think we are beginning to catch on to how they function. You know what to do when problems arise or you want action, and in many cases we're successful. And, incidentally, we're in and out of 110 Livingston Street in a way that we've never been before.

**SS:** What accounts for that?

**JL:** Our involvement in the school touches on practically every aspect of that organization. We have all sorts of problems with the law office, with the grants department, and with the curriculum division. We've had to find out about supplies that don't arrive. In other words, this isn't a simple matter of two or

three people taking care of something. You have to be in touch with any number of agencies.

**SS:** Would it be fair to say that New York City has a decentralized system that is highly centralized?

**JL:** That's correct. Now you know District 24 would love to absorb our school. That's Anthony's district. And we would thereby escape some of that centralization. But we'd also be at the mercy of a school board that changes. You know what I'm getting at. So, in some ways we are better off going into the lion's den in 110 Livingston Street even though you could tear your hair out at times trying to get some movement. We have, however, met some very fine people who really would like to see change, who are I think very effective.

**SS:** Is there anything you want to say that I haven't covered or brought out through my questions about the college-school relationship?

**JL:** I think there are two or three things. I mentioned that we were sort of slaves to a service model working with a school. One of our problems is there are these models or whatever you want to call them in place at the college. We have the academic model. Now the academic model at Queens College is the worst possible model to work through with faculty because it's so central to what most of our people are interested in: being promoted and so on. Putting out in the field is not considered at Queens to be enough. If you're going to do something of a field work nature and don't write it up or do something with it, it won't do anything for you professionally. On the one hand, the college very, very actively dissuades people from doing what the college, on the other hand, is encouraging us to do. And I think that really needs to be resolved. A person in the art department can go out and paint a number of paintings, have them displayed, and be promoted; whereas if you go into a school and you knock yourself out in every way, and the school is a living example that you've been effective, that counts for nothing. I would say that's something that colleges have to come to grips with if you're going to have this sort of major thrust in education departments.

I think another thing is that when you're in field-based operations like this you have to be selective about your faculty, because most of the faculty would just as soon stay on campus. New York is a very difficult place to work in the field, so you need to be selective about who's doing what. However, when the people do get out there and begin to see that this in many ways is much more satisfying than being completely involved with theory, you get a lot more action from your faculty members than you would expect.

**SS:** Yes, I can see that as a real problem.

**JL:** For instance we are going to see the President now because we would like someone to be given some recognition for what he would do in the field. I don't think we really should have to do that. On the other hand, I understand the academic model and I see why it works well for most things on campus. I am not at loggerheads with that exactly, but there are some unresolved areas there that are not good.

**SS:** Have you been involved in other college-school things other than I.S. 227?

**JL:** I was in the first School Within a School (SWS) project, which was also a Queens project. That was a difficult junior high school in Jamaica. They had a

small school in which 125 kids had been identified as underachievers, poor attenders, behavior problems, etc. We set up this program. They took all their classes, except certain things like gym and so on, with a small group of teachers. We're keen on this at 227 too, as in these huge schools it is difficult for students to identify with adults. This SWS project really made an attempt to do that. I used to teach there one day a week. I worked with a science teacher, Kenny Tewel, who later became the very successful principal of Franklin Lane High School here. He is one of the most successful principals with difficult kids. He is now at 110 Livingston Street. That was a highly successful program. The kids did achieve better, they attended regularly. I used to go there at eight in the morning, an hour before school opened, and almost all the kids I worked with would be there. They'd all be there because they wanted to get down and do things.

**SS:** You're saying that was a relatively successful program. What are the similarities between whatever went into making that a relatively successful program and what's gone into I.S. 227?

**JL:** The basic premise on which the project operated was that the students needed a community rather than a class. The difference with I.S. 227 is that in some ways the SWS project was a Band-Aid type thing. We're interested in changing a whole way of looking at an age group, the early adolescent age group. So what we're involved in is a massive sort of thing. That first project was a germ of an idea, but it was conceived originally as being a way of helping kids who were having problems in school.

**SS:** You weren't thinking in terms of structure. You were thinking in terms of how to help these particular kids.

**JL:** Well, through a structure, as it were. One of the problems we just had to accept at 227, was that middle schools don't work as well when they are huge, e.g., 1,200 children at the time of their life when they really need lots of identifiable people to work with. That's something we had to put up with but we would never suggest that that's a good way of handling this particular age group. The school started with a little less than 500 kids, and was supposed to develop over two years. That was another thing that was taken out of our hands.

**SS:** How many people from Queens were involved in the SWS project?

**JL:** I think probably about a dozen in various capacities. It was a much more concentrated effort when you think of the number of students and the number of faculty.

**SS:** How long did that go on?

**JL:** It went from three to four years.

**SS:** Then what happened?

**JL:** Well, that was the end of the grant period. That's one of these things. The project was successful so there was no reason to keep it going! It's a little bit like the Lincoln School that was supported by the Rockefellers at Teachers College. They had a certain span. At the end of that time it put out a thing to show how successful it was. So, the Rockefellers said well you've proven your point, so the school closed. Basically that was the reward there. We luckily are avoiding complete success so that ours can continue!

## An Interview With Clarence Bunch

**Seymour Sarason:** Clarence, could I ask what you remember about the different reasons you became part of the 227-Queens collaboration?

**Clarence Bunch:** One reason I was excited about it was the leadership in the project. The President was interested in this. It was something that was really high on his priorities. The moment he came into the college, the first people that he met with were education people. That seemed to be some indication that education people would have his support. And, obviously, this project had it. Another is John Lidstone who, like me, felt that here was probably an opportunity for a different kind of education, or at least a different approach as far as schooling is concerned, one that would investigate areas that were primarily neglected in New York City. I am referring to art and music, and physical education and dance, and those areas. The so-called affective areas versus the cognitive. So those are the things that really interested me. It wasn't going to be simply rehashing, redoing, the kind of old things that had been done to death. It was a time of possibilities.

**SS:** Were there any things that worried you about getting involved?

**CB:** The Board of Education's reputation was always in the back of my mind, as it was in practically everybody's. I realized that it was going to be extraordinarily time-consuming, but I don't know if that was necessarily a worry. It just was something I felt would have to be coped with. However, it turned out to be not as time-consuming as I thought.

**SS:** Did you have any thoughts that the teachers might not be receptive? Had you any previous experience in working with teachers in a school where there is to be a new agenda?

**CB:** No. My previous experience has been in schools with student teachers, projects that fit in an organization already there. I don't think I had any kind of worries about the faculty, about the teachers.

**SS:** In other words, you didn't have previous experiences that had scarred you, so to speak, in terms of working with a school where presumably there was going to be a new thrust which was going to involve change?

**CB:** No, I didn't. I came at it fresh.

**SS:** Could you tell us about the first few months, what you ran into, how your perspective was changing, hesitations?

**CB:** I'm very impatient, and the slowness of the whole thing I found irritating. One meeting after another, although I think those meetings went pretty well. A hangup from the very beginning was with the Board of Education. In the very early meetings that I sat in on at the Board, the Board of Education's committee would continually change. Each time you'd go back for a meeting there would be a new committee.

**SS:** Was this before the school opened up?

**CB:** This was before the school opened, at the talking stage, which was really very short. But that committee kept changing and changing and changing, which made it very difficult to even find anybody that you could talk to about a common program or a common basis, but eventually it settled down into a few people. One of the key people at the Board was Helene Lloyd. Once she became interested in the project then it seemed to me there was a basis that one could work from there, because she is knowledgeable and would carry through on discussions. In terms of the schools opening, things went fairly smoothly once Anthony realized that he was going to have to cooperate with Queens College, and that we were not there to undermine him in any way or to act in any kind of superior manner. We were there as a partnership, an ongoing relationship, and once that was established things went fairly smoothly in terms of the actual operation of the school. One of the things that I remember, at least in my own mind it sort of established the partnership idea with Anthony, is when we told him that we would pay for supervising the Early Bird program. Once he saw that kind of monetary commitment on our part, that seemed to change everything.

**SS:** So he was in favor of the Early Bird program but he didn't have or couldn't get the money?

**CB:** That's right.

**SS:** And the money you needed was to pay for people's time?

**CB:** It was to pay for a certified teacher to supervise student teachers who were teaching the actual classes.

**SS:** So you were talking about really a piddling amount of money.

**CB:** $1,000 a year.

**SS:** What were your objectives in terms of the arts at 227? What is it ideally you would like to see happen there?

**CB:** I would like to see art as a part of the curriculum, in the same way that math and science are. This was an opportunity to at least demonstrate that that could be done in a New York City public school. Also I'd like to see art approached differently than it is ordinarily in a school situation. I don't think that it's happened too much there.

**SS:** Could you elaborate on that?

**CB:** In most school situations, art is part of the desk top project, when it exists at all, and students are taught to make things that are really kind of portable. They are primarily craft-oriented projects. I would like to see a child work with and from, so to speak, his or her image rather than a teacher-determined image. That's one of the things I am beginning to work on now with the teachers. There are two ways to teach art, and most teachers teach it from the outside, as it were. They go into a classroom with a set notion of the things they can do and they come away from colleges and methods classes where a lot of project stuff is going on and a lot of motivation projects are set up. They bring that with them to the classroom. I really have nothing against it, but it seems to me there is another sort of approach which really has more to do with the individual. I would like art to be something that has more to do with the psyche than it has to do with a skill, less to do with using a scissors and more to do with a paintbrush.

**SS:** You say that now, in January 1982, you feel you are getting to the point where the teachers are beginning to understand and to act on this.

**CB:** Well, I wouldn't go so far as to say they are beginning to act on it. They, maybe, are beginning to understand.

**SS:** So it's essentially taken you two-and-a-half years to get to the point where you feel that maybe the conditions are beginning to exist?

**CB:** Well, I think it's really different because the teacher's day is so full, and they really don't have any kind of time for planning.

**SS:** When you say "teachers" you mean which teachers?

**CB:** The teachers at 227. The art teachers there are teaching a full day, and they end up with maybe one period a day in terms of planning. They have only one period a week when they can all meet together, and actually that never happens because there are always one or two who really can't meet with the group. So in terms of any kind of planning it is very difficult. They also come to the job with various backgrounds and expectations, and a real variance in terms of interest and dedication as far as teaching is concerned. So all those things, put into a pot, are really kind of unwieldy to deal with. But I think some of the teachers are really beginning now to approach the notion of some kind of expressiveness that grows out of the kid, that grows out of the psyche, rather than imposing it from the outside in terms of a problem to be solved. And I would like to see them get to what is really the most important thing: inner self-expression rather than problem solving in terms of making it work visually. That's good, you know, but I think there's something else to be gotten to. Incidentally, that is never talked about very much in art education. We talk about self-expression, but we really mean it in terms of visual expression, in terms of making a sheet of paper singing our way, but I would like to go beyond that one step, because that's where the real art experience comes through, that is supposedly what an artist does. Although again, the other side of the argument is that you are not teaching the child to be an artist, you're really teaching art appreciation, which is also true.

**SS:** What kept you going there over the last two-and-a-half years?

**CB:** I think it's enormously interesting. And there's an opportunity to develop a school where art is as important as a cognitive subject area. We haven't done any measurement, and I don't know how you go about measuring what value it has been, but we do know that it is a good school and the reading scores are high in terms of the rest of the city. There is no way of knowing what role the art and the music and the physical education had in all this, but I think it must have had something, because at least the kids are pleased to be there. I never see any discipline problem in art class, the kids are all working away, so I feel they're pleased about it, the kids are themselves, and the teachers seem to me to be happy and content overall.

**SS:** Isn't that unusual that there aren't any disciplinary problems in art classes?

**CB:** I think it's extraordinary. But there are very few discipline problems in the school at all. So far as I can tell the kids are a happy group. They seem pleased to be there and so do the teachers. I think that makes a big difference. I would rate that very high on any kind of scale in looking at the school.

**SS:** What evidence is there that by virtue of your relationship with the teacher that they put out more than they ordinarily put out in terms of time, meetings, when the meetings are held, and the like?

**CB:** Well, they never hesitate to meet at lunch, for instance. They'll take their own lunch hour to meet with me and with the student teachers. And we always meet as a group, students teachers and the faculty. They seem to be a very enthusiastic group of people. They are enormously interested in the museum and play a role in that, although that's something that's just now beginning to develop and I hope that their involvement in it will be an ongoing thing, as I hope it will be for the rest of the faculty. Incidentally, I don't see the museum as being strictly for art; I'd like to see the social studies people be involved in it in the same way the physical education people are planning a show now for that space. They have ideas about things we should do. Stacey Brooks, for instance, is a very creative person in terms of ideas. One thing we just did was to make Christmas cards for one of the city institutions in Corona for retarded adults, and Stacey had enormously good ideas as to how to go about this thing and she expanded the project. It was really Johanna Duncan's project. Stacey expanded it and made it much more imaginative than it was in the beginning.

**SS:** Could you tell about the origins of the idea of the museum and how did you carry that off?

**CB:** The museum began at a meeting in Rye, at the Wainwright House. Sid was there and John, and I guess Barry and Anthony. Sid and I were walking outside the building, on the grounds, and the idea of a museum had come up. It was something completely informal and we just did it.

**SS:** Was this before the school opened?

**CB:** I think maybe it was. But I am not absolutely sure. At any rate, that was the germ of the idea. At some point I talked to the faculty about it and they were enormously enthusiastic. The student teachers were taken with the idea immediately. I had waited a while actually because there was a lot of apprehension on my part as I felt the art faculty would view it favorably but I had lots of concern about Anthony. Also, there was a lot of empty space in the building, and I had my eye on the room that we now have because it is centrally located, a nice shape, the whole bit. When I mentioned it to the faculty and the student teachers they really wanted to pursue it right away and so we did, and I walked down the hall and asked Anthony if he would come to a meeting with us, and he said yes, and Anthony immediately said he thought it was terrific, and he would like to support it. He suggested we put it on the fourth floor though, and we were really reluctant to consider the idea because it was to be so far removed from traffic. Anthony really didn't question it. He said okay and gave us the room that we have. So actually the whole thing was quite simple to do. It was building the actual struture itself, that was hard, those walls that are flexible and turn around. It was very difficult to find somebody to do it and it took an enormously long time, but eventually Jim Warwick, who was on sabbatical from the Art faculty at Queens, built them during his sabbatical time. It all seemed to fall into place. It was an idea that had support all along. There was not one person who thought it shouldn't be done.

**SS:** Isn't that odd?

**CB:** I think it is a little odd in a normal situation, but I think the whole approach from the beginning allowed that to happen at Louis Armstrong.

**SS:** You said that one of your major aims is for the arts to be a co-equal part of the curriculum with so-called more cognitive fields. In what way has the museum begun to approach that?

**CB:** Could I say just one thing before I answer that? Having the Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades probably made the museum easier to work with, because it seemed that that structure gave the museum a support and a direction it might not have had. But I think that's true of the entire project. Having the Center has been the key to it in my mind.

Now back to your question. Bob Edgar, who worked with the social studies teachers in the school, talked to me some months ago about developing a show for the museum based on the 1930s, which they will be teaching this semester. So a subject in a cognitive area is using the art museum in its teaching, almost as a kind of tool. Now, the people I would like to see develop that exhibition would be the social studies faculty and the kids in those classes, and I would like to see it in terms of a real research project. I'd like to see those kids go to the library to find visual material from that period, talk to people in terms of an oral history project even. And there is no reason that there couldn't be, say, a slide component to it, or even a tape recording, in terms of interviewing. So I think the museum can be a basis of a lot of other kinds of learning that would be in a sense art-based, or at least art would be the motivation of it. I think that can happen. One of the things that bothers me about projects like "Learning to Read Through the Arts" is that art becomes secondary; it becomes a kind of stepping stone for something else. I don't mind art being used that way, but it seems to me that art experience is shortchanged.

**SS:** I find that social studies project fascinating because what immediately comes to mind if you're studying the thirties is the whole WPA art project and what that meant in terms of what literary and visual artists did.

**CB:** Absolutely, and also what it meant in terms of social situations. Those people existed on the money from that, you know.

**SS:** You can't talk about it without talking about the Depression, and what the country was going through. That's something that's going to take place?

**CB:** I hope it's going to take place. I'm sort of nudging Bob. I don't think he has done anything about it yet, but I hope he will. Now another thing that is going to take place is a show about children's books. Monroe Cohen's wife, Miriam, who is a well known author of children's books, has promised to do one. This exhibition will be on how the book is produced. It think it is an important thing because we learn from books obviously. Also it is a career thing, in a sense, because here are any number of careers that are touched upon—not only the writer and the illustrator but the publication company itself and the kinds of things that go on there, the promotion and what not. And I hope as a part of all this that Miriam Cohen will be there to talk to kids at least once, and she tells me that perhaps she can get the illustrator down for an interview, and somebody might come from the publishing company. Now those are terrific things to happen. Having the museum there to give the project a focus makes it different from all these people coming into the school and talking with the kids in an

assembly. The project will be there for about a month, and kids can come in in terms of appointments, groups of children, and also singly.

**SS:** They can come in singly?

**CB:** They can, but it is difficult to arrange. We don't quite have the organization down pat in terms of that happening, but they can certainly come in as groups now, and that's arranged through teachers, and teachers have been very enthusiastic in terms of support. Another show that we'll have are Japanese children's prints. These are different kinds of prints. They are wood cuts but they are different in approach to American kids' work. I have access to a lot of these prints and I'll use the ages that will correspond to the ages in the school. The show that will follow that one is by their teacher. She has a show in April in New York City, and she has given us a show at the same time. And they are really beautiful wood cuts, very unusual. And she will come out at some point and talk to the kids and the faculty. Now the reason I want her with the faculty is that I want to put a little pressure on the 227 faculty. They really need to keep up their own art work, because teachers tend not to. And here is an example, although it's another culture. Maybe that's an advantage. Here is an example of a teacher who is keeping up her own work, who has an international reputation, and who teaches school in Japan. So I think these are important things to do even if that's never said.

**SS:** Is all the classroom space at 227 being utilized now?

**CB:** I think so. I think it's difficult to find any space there now. I was lucky to get in there at the beginning.

**SS:** You were lucky to get in, but the thing that I begin to worry about is that the pressures may begin to build up to find space for the cognitive things and there is the museum, a sitting duck.

**CB:** It is now. However, I think we've got to work on the idea of keeping it absolutely up to the minute and accommodating as many children as we possibly can. I want to see it open from 8 in the morning until whenever the building closes, but that's hard to do. I also want to see those shows change frequently and that there be quality stuff there. I see it as a real gallery, a real museum. Now one thing that we haven't talked about yet is community involvement and action, because it should be a community museum too, and we will have somebody, or a group of people, from the community.

**SS:** What about parents and people around the school? Are they aware that the museum exists?

**CB:** I don't think they are too aware. That's something that we need to work on, and I am following through with your suggestion of a newsletter, which will also document it.

**SS:** Is there any other school in the city which has its own art museum?

**CB:** I don't think so, although I could be wrong about that. If there is—there must be other exhibition spaces—I don't think they have the kind of direction that we have. My feeling is there are probably more exhibition spaces rather than something that might be more integral to whatever is going on in the school.

**SS:** What have you learned from this experience that you think you didn't know?

**CB:** What I've learned is that there has to be some kind of consensus in terms of ideas. Now, if Sid hadn't been there when I first mentioned the notion of a museum, it wouldn't have happened. If he had been a different sort of person that would probably have been the end of it. And, of course, John Lidstone's support and concern. So I think that there has to be a group of people who think alike, and we've been very lucky to have that happen.

**SS:** I'm wondering if it's people who think alike, although that certainly is important, or if it's people who have respect for one another, in the sense that they have an obligation to help the other person develop the way he or she wants to develop. So a person may not be interested in art, but nevertheless can see your rationale.

**CB:** I think that's true, yes. And I guess when I said "think alike" that would be part of my description of that. I think the respect that we've had for one another has been a key part of this.

**SS:** If the funding for Queens' involvement, which is an insignificant amount of money compared to the total budget, were to fade away, what do you think that would do to Queens' involvement?

**CB:** All of my time at 227 has, in one sense, been voluntary time because I am chairing a department and all that still goes on. I haven't gotten any released time for this, which is fine. I'm not saying I should have. So using that as an example I would say not very much would change. Because once I leave the chair I go back to teaching, and at that point I probably would get some kind of teaching credit for whatever work I might do at 227 or at 71.

**SS:** In other words, whatever you have done is because you found it in your self-interest to do it.

**CB:** That's correct. It's really the people who have done the project. That's what interested me and that's the reason that I found it possible to continue with it.

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## An Interview With Eileen Byrnes

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**Seymour Sarason:** How have you viewed the Queens-227 involvement and what has your role in this involvement been?

**Eileen Byrnes:** I found out about the school back in August of 1979. A friend of mine was telling me that there was a new school opening up in Queens, that Queens College was going to be involved with the curriculum, and it was going to be for kids who were interested in dancing, music, and the arts, basically. And my daughter was going to a school where she wasn't getting much of that at all in her program. So I said, well, I'll take a look. I came here in September and met Mr. Alfant. He took me around the school, explained the program in reference to the computers that were going to be in the school, the things that they were doing now and that they were going to be doing in the future. I looked around the

school, and it just impressed me so much. It was a beautiful school, brand new and everything. I was asking questions about music, art, and all, and he was telling us about everything that they had here. Well, I was so impressed by it that I went home and actually took my daughter out of school, and I said, "Tina, We found a new school and we're going to go." Meanwhile, I lived in South Ozone Park which meant an hour or so on a bus every morning, just to come to school. Well, you know, she said, "Ma . . . my friends . . ." I said, "Don't worry about it. In the long run it's going to be worth it." And that's what we did. I went to the principal and pulled her out of the school, and she started here that next day. I also got involved in the school on the PTA, starting out as a corresponding secretary, working with all the committees, with Queens College, Mr. Sanfilippo and the teachers who I found were really terrific people. I was never involved before with a school. In my daughter's other school, the PTA meetings and anything that was involved with the school were always during the day. There was never anything at night. Nothing where the teachers and parents got together. So to me this was a very exciting moment for myself as well as my daughter.

**SS:** Were there any questions in your mind about the move?

**EB:** Well, my daughter had been (I didn't know at the time) under grade level in reading. I only found that out after I found out that I could see my daughter's records. I asked Mr. Alfant what the programs would be, would there be any kind of reading programs that my daughter could get involved in. And he told me, yes, there would be. I felt my daughter was not going any place in the school that she was in. It was just a basic 9:00 to 3:00, and they just weren't giving her anything outside of the basic program. And I really thought that my daughter should have more of a curriculum than that. I came here with a very negative attitude, honestly, because I knew how far away it was from my house. But I moved.

**SS:** You moved?

**EB:** I moved into Astoria so that I could be closer to the school once my daughter got in.

**SS:** Then what happened?

**EB:** Well, we've been here ever since and I've been very involved with the school. I have learned a lot myself by getting involved with Queens College and meeting all the people from there and with teachers from the school here. It feels like my school also.

**SS:** What are the different roles you've had in relation to the school?

**EB:** I started out as corresponding secretary, and I've been on the Advisory Board with Queens College and with teachers. I was involved with the hospitality and the open house and with pupil recruitment. Now I am Vice-President on the Executive Board of the Parent/Teachers Association.

**SS:** And what would you do in regard to pupil recruitment?

**EB:** Basically tell the parents how good the school is. We'd explain to them the program in the school. What Queens College and I.S. 227—the educational end of it—were trying to do for the kids.

**SS:** What were the parents' attitudes about sending their kids here?

**EB:** I lived in Ridgewood at one time, and that's where I used to go to dancing school, so a lot of the parents I was talking to were from District 24. I think a lot of them ended up with their children here at the school. Their attitude at the beginning was that the bus ride is going to be a long one. A lot of them have adjusted to it. You just get up a little bit earlier. I see them a lot now at the PTA meetings, all of my friends from Ridgewood where I used to live. A lot of them took my word, came to the school, looked at it, and got on the waiting list, like everyone else.

**SS:** Can you now talk about it from the standpoint of your daughter?

**EB:** My daughter was reluctant at the beginning, because she had all her friends in the other school. She started at the other school in kindergarten. Well my daughter had come to this school, and she was under grade level in reading. As a matter of fact, the tutor who was involved with Queens College was doing something for her Master's degree, and she needed a student to tutor so she took my daughter and tutored her for a year. My daughter went from a 5.4 reading level average to 8.9 and the confidence that this woman gave my daughter was tremendous. My daughter ended up passing math because the reading part of math had been her problem. So now she definitely has the confidence in herself. She's grown, I would say, about ten feet tall since she came to this school. She's going to the High School of Fashion and Technology.

**SS:** You mentioned before that one of the reasons you were particularly interested in 227 were the arts—music and the like. To what extent did that have meaning for your daughter when she got there?

**EB:** We were in dancing school for about ten years. She's been dancing since she was three, and she joined a dance class. She likes drama. My daughter likes getting involved and the dancing program here was very good. But she also wanted to learn music. She didn't have this at the other school.

**SS:** So she's been here since 1979. Now she'll be leaving and going to the Fashion Institute. What were you learning about 227 through the eyes of your daughter? Any problems?

**EB:** There were a few problems, which there always are with kids, especially when you take a child from one area and you move her to another one completely. She did come here with a friend of hers, though, which worked out even better. So when they started they were both together and then they became friends with all the other kids eventually. It is a group of people from all over Queens. The problems weren't too bad, except for her reading and math, which now, with the help of the school, she is a lot better off.

**SS:** There is a very mixed group of students here. How would you describe the mix as you've seen it? What does it consist of?

**EB:** One of every culture, I think. I think it's great for kids to be exposed to all different cultures and all different kinds of people.

**SS:** Did this present any problems to your daughter in terms of getting along with different kids?

**EB:** No. I never brought my daughter up that way. I brought my daughter up to take a person on a one-by-one basis, not as a group. As an individual. Just one on one. If you like the person, you like him. If you don't, you don't.

**SS:** So from the standpoint of your daughter, she never related anything that had to do with racial, ethnic, cultural, religious problems?

**EB:** No. Because I was a Girl Scout leader, and my daughter was a Brownie, and the neighborhood where I came from was a completely mixed area, and I worked with all children.

**SS:** How do you account for the fact that you're describing 227 as very different from a lot of other schools?

**EB:** Well I can explain it just because of the individual training that teachers would give to the children who needed it. The group in my daughter's class is not a group of just really slow children, or middle children, or advanced. Everybody works together. And I think that helped my daughter also. Because she was not in a class where it was slow. When my daughter did need help in her math class one of the teachers or student teachers from Queens College would help her, and it gave her the confidence to say that if this man or woman is taking time out to work with me then I might be important, and through that my daughter has become aware of her importance. In the other school she was just sitting in back of the classroom, and there was nothing she was gaining as far as her self-confidence was concerned.

**SS:** How come you had nothing to do as a parent in the other school?

**EB:** Because it was a very tight group of people and parents. Plus, the meetings were at one o'clock in the afternoon. I've been a single parent for 13 years and I've always worked. The only time I would have to take off was when I had to go to see the principal. My daughter was a good student in the school, so I really didn't have that much involvement in the school.

**SS:** May I ask what changed in your life so that you're able to give time here?

**EB:** The people here. They have night meetings. They seem to be more—want to be more—involved with the parents. There was just a whole different atmosphere. I found that people who were in the education end of the world were not as bad as I thought they were. You know, a lot of people, parents, teachers, mix together, and I found that almost everybody in this school is dynamite. I really do. All the teachers, Queens College . . .

**SS:** I am going to assume that you have met and talked with parents who wouldn't talk with such enthusiasm as you.

**EB:** Yes, there are some parents. To me this is a good school to round out my daughter in all aspects of education and culture. There are some kids who left some SP [special progress classes for intellectually gifted children] classes, I think they are, and came to this school and found that it really wasn't what they wanted. But, you know, everybody to their own. They tried, and maybe they felt that it couldn't work for them.

**SS:** Did you play any role at all in relation to the selection of the new principal?

**EB:** No, I could not because I was working during the summer when the committee met. Normally, during the summer I am not around too often.

**SS:** Do you have other children?

**EB:** No.

**SS:** The school has been going since 1979. When your daughter came here the school had four or five hundred students. Today it has well over 1,200 students and it may have somewhat more than that. Has the growth in the school presented any problems—not to you, necessarily—but from your relationships, do you see that this has created any problems?

**EB:** Not really. It was a more personal thing the first two years. The first year definitely, and then the second year also. I knew almost all of the teachers. Unfortunately, we don't know them all today. My daughter was used to a big school. So the first year she felt like she was going to a private school. Now she is just getting used to the fact that it is back to a normal school again, because it is a full school now.

**SS:** How does she get here in the morning?

**EB:** By the school bus.

**SS:** Is she able to take advantage of the Early Bird program?

**EB:** Yes, she is.

**SS:** And then she takes the bus home?

**EB:** If she is not involved with the drama or, at one time, it was the dance class, or something in the afternoon. And then the public transportation. It takes a little bit longer, but she really enjoys coming to the school so I don't have to force her to go.

**SS:** Has she developed friendships with children in the school who don't live in the neighborhood?

**EB:** Oh, yes. And they see each other, and stay over each other's houses. They'll take the bus, kids will stay at my house or she'll go over to their house.

**SS:** If there was one recommendation you would make to 227, what might it be?

**EB:** Well, one thing I would like to see is a lot more parents get involved. I like the communication between the parents and the teachers, and I'd like to see it even more so. It's always the same parents all the time who get involved; I'd really like to see a lot more.

**SS:** Do you have any ideas about why some of them don't get involved?

**EB:** I think they just leave it up to the other person. Well, if so-and-so is involved, I don't have to be. It's a shame. I had problems myself when my daughter left that other school. My daughter's education was important and I wanted to be involved with it as much as possible. I tell other parents that constantly. It sounds as if I am preaching all the time. But I tell them you have to get involved. Your child only goes through this road one time, and if you can't go through it with them, I think it's sad. You can always make time for whatever you feel is most important in your life. There is time for your children.

**SS:** There has been a change in principals relatively recently. How do you see what difference that might make?

**EB:** I felt kind of bad because Mr. Sanfilippo was a good principal, and at first I felt that he was leaving the ship, so to speak. Mr. Herman [the new principal] I am not too familiar with yet. He seems to be a nice person. My daughter has said a few nice things about him. She sees him in the hallways, he seems to be pretty involved with the children. Mr. Sanfilippo was a nice person and he got involved with the kids as far as I could see. Between him and Mr. Alfant, I really felt the school was a good school. I do miss him being here as principal. When you first start a school usually you like to see the same people stay with the school.

**SS:** When you told the principal from the old school that you were taking your daughter out, what did he say to you?

**EB:** He didn't want me to take my daughter out. I was in Cypress Hills where white was a minority and he did not want me taking my daughter out of the school. So I moved. I had a lot of changes to make and I had to uproot a lot of different things, but I wanted my daughter to have a better education. Fortunately, I am a very determined person. I make my mind up and . . .

**SS:** In the recruitment process did parents report pressure being put on them not to come to 227?

**EB:** There were some pressures with the other schools because they didn't want to lose the children in the area. I.S. 227 was open to all of Queens. And a lot of my friends did say they would have preferred that we didn't come into a district and talk to them. But that was the only way we were going to get the children to fill the seats here at the school and a lot of the schools in the area don't have the atmosphere and programs that 227 has.

**SS:** How do you view the art program here?

**EB:** My daughter has had art for the last few years. When she first came here, she didn't think that she could draw a line, and now she is involved with drawing and with fashion, which is also designing. She is looking forward to doing that. A lot of the things that she didn't think she was capable of doing the school has brought out.

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## An Interview With Betty Bogart

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**Seymour Sarason:** How did you first come to 227?

**Betty Bogart:** I had first heard about the school in the context that it was offering additional music and art to children. I had gone to the High School of Music and Art and I thought what an ideal dream for a child to have a school that would have the kind of atmosphere and feeling that I experienced in a music and art atmosphere, which is such a natural part of their life. That was my first exposure. And then my second exposure was when I heard about the connection with Queens College and I was excited about the thought that there could be that kind of connection with a college. So I sought a job here and accidentally met my ex-professor in the process.

**SS:** Where were you teaching at the time?

**BB:** I was teaching at a private school, but my background extends through seven years of public schools in Nassau County and two years of permanent subbing in New York City. When the excessing came, I went into a private school.

**SS:** You came here when?

**BB:** This past September, 1981.

**SS:** In what way is music and art represented here that it is not represented in most New York City schools and why?

**BB:** Well, I am not formally involved in the music and art program in I.S. 227. I can only tell you hearsay about what they do with music and art, but I certainly can see by the bulletin boards, by meeting the teachers of the art program, that there is a regular curriculum. I think it's five days a week, rather than just a few times a week in the usual school. But my excitement was that it was an atmosphere for me to integrate music and art into my classroom and I immediately hooked in with Audrey Cohen, who is a language arts teacher who had my children, and I said I would love to do an art activity involving maps and social studies. We sort of did team teaching where she used her art. I have musical ability so I used my music. The children were learning social studies at the same time. I can only listen to concerts and things like that and tell you how I can envision it in an integrated curriculum within a whole of bringing teachers to work together. You have the openness here of being able to say "Let's do some team teaching. You have a skill in this, I have a skill in that, let's have our kids working together."

**SS:** Did anything like this occur in your teaching in the private schools in Nassau County?

**BB:** In Nassau County I was a grade coordinator, so what I had done was bring all of the teachers together at our grade meetings to share the things that we were doing in our classrooms with each other, and in a sense we were able to get some of that. Also, we had a music teacher who was available to every teacher. If I were putting on a play I had a professional person sitting down at the piano, or helping my kids learn a particular part if they were playing an instrument, or something within a performance. So in Nassau County I had the coordination and the facilities to do that. In New York City I never experienced anything like that, and in the private school things are very tight. Everybody has so much to do and so little time. You can call on parents, or the children themselves, but it is very difficult to involve other teachers, because everybody is so overburdened with managing everything, because that's what they have to do, everything, in such a short period of time.

**SS:** In what ways is 227, as you now know it, meeting your expectations, the expectations you had when you came here?

**BB:** At first it was all rosy. But I would say that one of the problems would be political. I am not used to being in such a large organization, even in Nassau. I seem to find that there might be groups of people with ideas who sort of stay together and aren't necessarily open. I think it's just natural when large groups of people get together sometimes there's a threat by somebody coming in. I think that would be something you would find in any large group where some people

will feel that this is the way things should be done. When something new is introduced they possibly will resent it, and if you're part of the new group you have to sit very quietly if you don't agree with them. Part of that may be new versus old people, part of that may be a philosophy of teaching that is a bit narrower than others who may be much more willing to accept.

**SS:** Would you say that the effort between you and Audrey Cohen is unusual in this school?

**BB:** I would say, from my exposure, there have been a number of people who picked up on it easily, because I coordinated with the science teacher, Ray Tereszkiewicz, and I coordinated with the language teacher, Fran Messer, and I have been sharing ideas with Michael LaForgia's social studies in the fifth grade. The two of us have the fifth grade and he is excited about the things I contribute to him. Just this morning I found out about two field trips that I think are very exciting and that I am going to try and put my class into. He has changed his curriculum in terms of what I am doing and I have changed my curriculum in terms of emphasis.

**SS:** Can you give me one example?

**BB:** Yes. He and I both found studying the states a boring task unless you can bring enthusiasm to the kids and make it exciting or different in some way. I had in the beginning of the year shown him a map I had done to show where the children can relate to their origins and their personal feelings about themselves—the countries they originally came from—connect it with the diversity of the world that they come from, their ancestral heritage, to the diversity of the communities they come from in Queens, to the diversity of the individual natures of the individual children. And still do this in a well-functioning classroom. He, in turn, did the same thing in his room upstairs. He just came to me and said that he is finding that the states can get very dry, and he really would prefer to go into things like the court situation, or the government, the way the states run, and do law, problems in the street, vandalism, things like that, and show how a city and a community function. I have a feeling that this would be not only functional but exciting, and I have every intention of diverting from the strict curriculum at this particular point. They have never heard of the House of Representatives, they have never heard of Congress, they don't know who their senators are, they don't know anything, and they are in fifth grade. So I have all intentions of trying to develop a model government program within my classroom that I feel is an offshoot of what Michael LaForgia is doing in his room.

**SS:** Do you have any relationships with the faculty at Queens College?

**BB:** Dr. Trubowitz was my professor. Whenever problems trouble me I very often will air it with him and he has been most supportive and helpful and I have been really feeling good about that. I have also been able to speak very readily with Dr. Monroe Cohen, and he has stimulated me. This is what I like about the university connection. I have shared an idea about something I was going to do with a mentorship program that I am coordinating with him, and he in turn showed me how to involve the community and gave me excellent ideas. His wife has just become a mentor for three of my mentor students who are interested in writing. We sat down together and had an exciting experience where she excited my children and they in turn are going to be writing science fiction. So I've made

connections. I've also been able to hook into Queens College with Dr. Bunch, who is allowing one of the students to film. One of my mentor teachers had come to me with the problem that the children would really be excited if they could take the play they were writing and produce it on film. Dr. Bunch was immediately cooperative in supplying us with the equipment from the college.

**SS:** Have you, when you were in your previous position with the school in Nassau County, or when you were subbing for two years in New York City, related to a college or university in any way?

**BB:** We had student teachers. In Nassau County we had coordinators who were basically knowledgeable in their field. In Queens they have coordinators too, not that you see them unless you make an outright effort to have them come in, who are basically there because they are experts in either science or something. I had an audiovisual person come into my room in Merrick who did fantastic things with the children in showing them how to develop filmstrips of their own, so I didn't have to be the expert in an art area which I am not necessarily comfortable in, and he had them doing filmstrips in relation to the Whitney language curriculum, things like that. I had a librarian who had just been to Alaska, and she came in with all kinds of slides and did a fantastic presentation.

**SS:** If somebody asked you to describe the student body here, characterize it in any way that you wanted, how would you do it?

**BB:** There are all races, all religions, all kinds of ethnic backgrounds, they are a melting pot. I am sure, noticing how many children there are on free lunch, there is an economic diversity of tremendous magnitude. I have one child, an only child, who has been all over the world practically, and been spoiled rotten, down to the child who is on free lunch, so there is a tremendous diversity in that sense, and yet I find that, although the parents don't seem to be completely involved, I would hesitate to say that these are necessarily the real deprived children because I find a bottom line of parent involvement here because a large percentage of the kids came here by choice of the parent. Take the kid in your classroom who really has problems because nobody cares. I don't seem to have anybody of that nature where they seem to be devoid of care, and so I wouldn't say it is a typical inner-city problem school.

**SS:** What's the range of background of the kids—culturally, religiously, ethnically, racially—in your classroom?

**BB:** Religiously, I am sure, every American type of religion, from atheist to an extreme of the major religions, is within my room. Ethnically, it just came out with the social studies unit we did, where the parents brought native foods in, we had curry and we had things the children had never tasted before. We had soul food shared with the class. Everybody was open for it. It just really eliminates borders. I don't see cliques of economic groups that eat together and things like that. Within the class they seem to really enjoy each other, and if there is any conflict at all between children, it is usually personalities. Especially in my fifth grade class. In my seventh grade class I notice kids sticking together ethnically, possibly it would be more natural, but I see no problems with that at all.

**SS:** In coming in this morning I was reminded again that this school has been open since 1979 and there is no graffiti on the school building. Did that strike you?

**BB:** It struck me. First of all, that mural has definitely added to the school. It is a work of art and I have a feeling that there may be pride in the community. If there is graffiti at all it might possibly be from neighborhood children who are not in the school, and even they, obviously, are not tempted to take a touch of something that looks beautiful and do something to damage it. It just may be appealing to their aesthetic sense in the first place, and possibly when you live with the dirt all around you, you're willing to contribute more.

**SS:** You said you went to the High School of Music and Art, and that 227, you had been told, was going to have music and art, but that it wasn't going to be a music and art school. I'm not clear why other schools don't have more music and art, and if what I've been told is true, it isn't that 227 was set up with special funds to do this.

**BB:** Well, first of all they have what is called an extended day. Extra periods to fit in that kind of thing, including a language, which many schools at the level of fifth and sixth grades do not have. Fifth and sixth graders do not have language in regular elementary schools. It seems an exciting concept to me that they can have an expert teacher of a foreign language. I used to teach language in the classroom, but I am not a linguist. Maybe I have a wrong accent on a word, or something like that, but here they have somebody who is qualified and who is licensed in the area of language.

**SS:** Then it's the longer school day?

**BB:** It goes to 3:45. Yes, it has an extra full period. Again I attribute a lot of this to the Queens College connection. The notices I have been giving out to my children show that there have been opportunities to come to the Early Bird program in the morning, and there is a Queens College music connection there, where they can come and get lessons. They have drama groups that meet after school, dance groups that meet after school, they have before and after school activities which I think are facilitated by having faculty from the college as well as possibly paid hours. I don't know, these people who stay I am assuming are being paid. I don't know whether many schools can manage to pay their teachers to come for extracurricular activities. So there are lots of attractions here that would be nice if they could be continued and could spread to other schools. I don't know if it is feasible or realistic. I am sure there are some ways interested teachers would just enjoy doing that kind of thing.

**SS:** I know it's true in schools elsewhere that, by virtue of being members of the union, teachers don't give much extra time to the school unless they are going to be paid for it. What is your experience here at 227 in that regard?

**BB:** I would say that for many of the faculty there is a commitment to go a little bit beyond what one normally does. I don't feel union pressure here. In the one city school I worked in, when someone tried to go into the teachers' room or during a lunch period tried to read to their class, the union got on their backs.

**SS:** Explain that—what happens?

**BB:** This teacher decided to use his lunch period to read to his class, and the union got after him because that meant that the other teachers looked bad for not doing it. So, therefore, he had to not do it, too. When I was going to take some students during a free period and help them with additional work in the teachers'

room, there was a fuss. That was in a New York City school and I had a bad taste in my mouth from that. I see nothing like that here. I see teachers working on their lunch periods all the time. I am sure there are those who don't, but I really feel you can do your own thing and you can be as professional as you like without the union getting on your back.

**SS:** Just one more question. If you were asked to make one or two suggestions about maintaining or improving what's going on at 227, what might they be?

**BB:** One in particular. A survey went around to the children—my class is the only departmentalized fifth grade class—asking whether they would like to be in a classroom together, changing teachers but in the same room together for a morning, or whether they woud prefer what they have now. I don't know what they are going to do with this information, but only one child in the class wanted to change. They love the departmental setup. They love the ability to pick themselves up and move on to another teacher. They are excited about the idea that they are acting like grown-ups, that they have the break in between periods where they can, without any problem, talk to each other in the halls, walk around, stretch their legs, and I understand that they are going to change this, and everyone is going to be together in one classroom. I am wondering if they are going to use their professional knowledge and experience or whether they are going to take seriously children's responses and reactions. They *did* survey them. I would assume that if they are going to survey them then they are going to use that in the decisionmaking. That was my emphasis. So I would say that if you are going to survey children on how they feel about a program, you use what children tell you. I would hope that they will take what the children say about not being in the same room together all the time.

# *Appendix C Directory of Main Participants*

**Bernard Alfant** has been assistant principal since the beginning; after Anthony Sanfilippo left he filled the role of acting principal for seven months.

**Luiz Antonelli** is a Professor of Counselor Education who supervises the activities of the Marriage and Family Counseling Program at the school.

**Ed Aquilone** was called in as Board of Education representative to deal with emergency situation when older group of special education students were being assigned to the school without prior consultation.

**Clarence Bunch** is Professor of Art Education; "father" of the Louis Armstrong School and Community Arts Museum, and, while Chairman of the Department of Secondary Education, was part of the original college group that helped to develop a design for the school.

**Linda Catelli** is Professor of Physical and Health Education who works with the physical education teachers to help them provide for children at different levels of development.

**Monroe Cohen** assumed Dr. Fibkins' position as Project Director of the ESAA grant and as head of the Queens College Center's Institute for Family and Community Life.

**Saul Cohen** is President of Queens College, City University of New York—initiated college involvement in the collaboration.

**Glenna Davis-Sloan** is Professor of Elementary Education who developed a story telling project at the school for a six month period.

**Johanna Duncan** served as Associate Director of the ESAA project with both William Fibkins and Monroe Cohen.

**Bob Edgar** is Professor of Secondary Education specializing in social studies; has been at the school from the beginning working with public school faculty and student teachers; has recently retired but still comes to the school.

**Larry Eisman** is Professor of Music who serves as consultant to the Music Department and helped to initiate a music tutorial program in which Queens College music students gave free instruction on musical instruments to I.S. 227 pupils.

**Debbie Elkins** is Professor Emeritus who has been a consultant for the Language Arts Department, assisting them with curriculum building.

**Bill Fibkins** was Project Director of the college's Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) grant from 1980-81; left for a position at the Shoreham-Wading River Middle School.

**Kenny Greenberg** is the programmer for the school; decisions regarding organizational change needed to be filtered through him.

**Edie Grossman,** Professor of School Psychology who was the college's liaison to special education, left for full-time work at the college after two years.

**Al Herman** has been Principal of the school since February 1982; a former principal of an elementary school.

**Rose Hershenson** is the moving force behind organizing senior citizens' classes at the school.

**Jim Higgins** is Professor of Elementary Education who worked at Public School 71 in the area of children's literature.

**Louise Latty** was the first superintendent from the Board of Education given responsibility for the school.

**Richard Lewis** is the Director of the Touchstone Center for the Arts who serves as visiting artist under a New York Foundation for the Arts grant; he works with teachers and children developing curriculum based on the theme of the sea.

**John Lidstone** is Dean of the School of Education—helped to design the plan for the school and has been involved in the ongoing operation and assessment of the project.

**Helene Lloyd** was given responsibility from the Board of Education to oversee the school along with Al Oliver.

**Paul Longo** filled the position of college liaison to Public School 71. In that role he supervised graduate interns and facilitated the use of college resources at the school.

**Frank Macchiarola** is former Chancellor of the New York City Public School System— with Saul Cohen was one of the originators of the project.

**Spencer McLaughlin,** Co-president of the Parent Teachers Association, helped to initiate the community internship program for eighth graders

**Rada Milentijevic** was the original liaison from the Board of Education designated by Chancellor Macchiarola to oversee the school.

**Claire Newman** is Professor of Mathematics Education who has just recently become part of the project as consultant to the school's department of mathematics.

**Al Oliver** is Louise Latty's successor as liaison from the Board of Education.

**Claire Press** was originally the administrative assistant for the ESAA grant; now director of the Community Education Resource Center located at the school.

**Harry Rice** is Professor of Secondary Education with a speciality in social studies; for four years he has been the mentor for an Early Bird Bridge Club; with Bob Edgar's retirement he has taken over the supervision of social studies student teachers.

**Frank Riessman** is Professor of Elementary Education who helped introduce the peer tutoring program and now acts as a consultant for Kenny Greenberg who supervises the program on a day-to-day basis.

**Linda Roots** is Co-president of the Parent Teachers Association; an active participant on the Parent Advisory Board.

**Arthur Salz** is Professor of Elementary Education who supports fifth and sixth grade teachers in their efforts to develop more experiential learning; has been at the school from the start.

**Anthony Sanfilippo** was the first principal of I.S. 227. He is presently Superintendent of neighboring District 24—Principal of the school for the first two years.

**Seymour Sarason** is Professor of Psychology in the Institute for Social and Policy Studies at Yale University; has been filling the role of consultant from the onset.

**Lester Schwartz** is Professor of Counselor Education who serves as consultant for the pupil personnel team.

**Jackie Tellish** is the bilingual community resource room aide; employed under the State Department of Education ESAA grant; is filling the position held by Terry Obradovich when the Federal ESAA grant was in place.

**Sidney Trubowitz** is Associate Dean of Education and Director of the Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades—serves as liaison between the college and the school and who, in his on-site role, has been adviser, critic, counselor, ombudsman, mediator, and facilitator.

**Lee Ann Truesdell** is Professor of Special Education who works with special education teachers and with other teachers on problems of mainstreaming and differentiating instruction; has been at the school the last two years as replacement for Dr. Grossman.

**Susan Turkel** is Professor of Elementary Education who helped to develop a computer education program at P.S. 71.

**Nat Washton** is Professor Emeritus of Science Education who returns periodically to lend support to the teachers of science.

**Marvin Weingart** is the latest Board of Education Superintendent to be assigned responsibility for the school.

**Barry Wiesenfeld** is the Administrative Assistant who played an integral role in school administration; serves as adjunct lecturer in science education at the college.

**Teachers, Parents, Secretaries, Community Representatives, and Children** all of whom recognize the uniqueness of I.S. 227 and have contributed to its designation as one of the outstanding secondary schools in the nation by the Federal Department of Education.

# *Appendix D*
# *Chronology of Main Events*

**March 1979.** President Saul Cohen of Queens College and former Chancellor of the New York City Public School system, Frank Macchiarola, agree to a college-public school partnership at the Louis Armstrong Middle School.

**April 1979.** The leadership of the School of Education meets to develop a plan for the Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades.

**April 1979.** Representatives of the New York City Public System leadership meet with School of Education Dean and Chairpersons to plan a design for the Louis Armstrong Middle School.

**April 1979.** Rada Milentijevic is designated as Board of Education liaison to the school.

**May 1979.** Judge Charles Sifton mandates I.S. 227 to be used to help desegregate schools in District 24.

**May 1979.** President Saul Cohen designates Sidney Trubowitz as Director of the Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades and Associate Dean of Education.

**June 1979.** Anthony Sanfilippo is appointed the school's first principal. He is soon joined by Bernard Alfant as the school's assistant principal.

**July 1979.** Recruitment and selection of pupils and teachers begin.

**August 1979.** First Staff Development program begins.

**August 1979.** Louise Latty is appointed Board of Education Superintendent with responsibility for the school.

**September 10, 1979.** The school opens with 160 pupils.

**October 1979.** Teachers, administrators, and professors transport 1,500 books from the Queens College library to stock the empty shelves at the I.S. 227 library.

**January 1980.** The Early Bird program begins.

**March 1980.** The Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades receives a grant under the Emergency School Aid Act.

**May 1980.** William Fibkins is appointed Project Director for the ESAA grant. Johanna Duncan, Claire Press, and Terry Obradovich are selected to be part of his staff.

**July-August 1980.** Second summer staff development program is conducted.

**September 1980.** Second school year begins with 800 pupils (two-thirds of the school's ultimate population).

**November 1980.** Board of Education without warning arranges to place 30 special education children in school. Some of the children are 15 years of age.

**January 1981.** The Louis Armstrong School and Community Arts Museum opens.

**February 1981.** Dr. Albert Oliver becomes the Board of Education representative to the school.

**March 1981.** Edward Aquilone is designated as still another Board of Education liaison

**May 1981.** Anthony Sanfilippo is selected to be the new Superintendent of District 24.

**June 1981.** Bill Fibkins resigns as head of the Institute of Family and Community Life and as ESAA Project Director.

**July 1981.** Bernie Alfant begins service as Acting Principal.

**July 1981.** Monroe Cohen is chosen as the new director of the Institute of Family and Community Life.

**August 1981.** The completion of the Louis Armstrong mural which now greets all visitors to the building is commemorated by a formal dedication attended by parents, community representatives, local politicians, school and college staff and children.

**September 1981.** The Queens College Center's graduate internship program begins.

**September 1981.** The school begins its third year with a full complement of 1,200 children.

**October 1981.** Helene Lloyd is selected to serve as still another liaison for the Board of Education.

**January 1982.** Al Herman becomes principal of I.S. 227.

**March 1982.** The college and school learn that Federal ESAA grants will no longer be available and funds have been relegated to state bloc grants.

**April 1982.** A multimedia presentation depicting the school is shown at Open House for parents.

**May 1982.** The school is selected as one of 30 finalists nationwide for designation as an exemplary school in the arts by the Rockefeller Foundation.

**June 1982.** As part of a Mott Foundation grant the school is chosen by the New York City Board of Education to be a Community Education Resource Center. It becomes the only such center in the borough of Queens.

**June 1982.** The Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades receives a grant from the New York Foundation of the Arts.

**September 1982.** The school begins its fourth year with 1,300 children.

**October 1982.** The Queens College Center for the Improvement of Education in the Middle Grades receives an ESAA grant from the New York State Department of Education.

**November 1982.** The school is selected by the Anti-Defamation League to be one of its three pilot schools in the nation to participate in a prejudice reduction project.

**February 1983.** I.S. 227 is featured on an NBC Channel 4 program for its activities providing for the needs of latchkey children.

**June 1983.** Marvin Weingart becomes the sixth Board of Education representative given responsibility for the school.

**July 1983.** The Louis Armstrong Middle School is recognized by the Federal Department of Education as one of the nation's outstanding secondary schools.